THE HOME OF GOD'S PEOPLE

A. Judson Jones
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THE

HOME OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

BY

REV. WILLIAM L. GAGE,

Editor and Translator of "Ritter's Palestine," "Tischendorf's Origin of the Gospels," etc., etc., and Author of "Life of Carl Ritter," "Modern Historical Atlas," "Lowell Lectures on Palestine," "Studies in Bible Lands," &c., &c.



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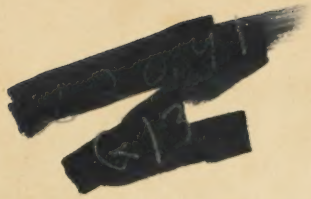
PUBLISHED BY SUBSCRIPTION, ONLY.

DUSTIN, GILMAN, & CO., HARTFORD, CONN.

QUEEN CITY PUBLISHING COMPANY, CINCINNATI, OHIO.—M. A. PARKER & CO., CHICAGO, ILL.—F. A. HUTCHINSON & CO., ST. LOUIS, MO.

1874.

LD
7-26-89



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TO
THOSE MANY
FRIENDS IN FOR-
EIGN LANDS, WHO HAVE
ASSISTED ME WITH THEIR
COUNSEL, OR LIGHTENED MY LABORS
WITH THEIR FRIENDSHIP, WHILE COLLECTING
THE MATERIALS FOR THIS AND KIN-
DRED WORKS, THIS VOLUME
IS GRATEFULLY DEDI-
CATED, BY THE
AUTHOR.

* *
*

PREFACE.

THERE is a certain mystery which rests upon the land where those writings were indited which we all agree in calling Sacred. The Book which records the development of the religious thought of those who have gained the clearest insight into the character of God, is a book of mystery, and its secrets are still the wonder and the controversy of the world. Egypt, Sinai and Palestine share that mystery; they are still the regions over which a halo, brighter than romance, still hovers, and the common, garish light of nineteenth century reality has not yet banished the charm with which the imagination lingers on what we call, with a deeper meaning than we know, the Holy Land.

I may be permitted to confess to the reader that I have put much honest labor into this work, and now give it to the public as the ripened result of many years' study. Amid the cares of an active pastorship, my recreation has long been in the field of sacred geography and history; a protracted residence abroad has allowed me to accumulate much material, and the public has already received the results in the large

work of Ritter, translated from the German, and edited with conscientious care.

The key note of this book may be said to be Ritter's great and dominating idea of the sisterhood, or rather twinship of geography and history. Though the pages will be seen to have largely a historical character, and at first glance will appear to be a repetition of what other pens have done, yet a more careful scrutiny will show that the old story is told afresh mainly for the purpose of casting upon it the side light of sacred geography. The Land of the Bible is the best commentator on the Bible itself, and he alone can enter into an understanding of Holy Writ who is willing to read the handwriting of God on those rocks and hills and plains where he mirrored his own thought, and whose physical features have become the symbols of his own truth.

W. L. Gage.

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CHAPTER I.

THE HAUNTS AND WANDERINGS OF ABRAHAM.

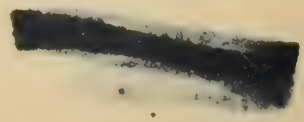
Obscurity of the Opening Chapters of the Bible—Not the Men and Women of To-day—Clearing Up—Abraham a Distinct Character—Ur of the Chaldees—Ur now a Missionary Station of the American Board—Abraham Journeys to Haran—Goes Onward to Damascus—Next Appears at the smiling Plain of Shechem—Then at the Hallowed Shrine of Bethel—Famines, common in those days—Abraham, the Rich Man, divides the whole country with Lot—Abraham gets after all the Best of the Bargain—Invasion of the "Kings of the East"—Dead Sea Described—Abraham's Victory over the Chieftains from the Plains of Shinar.

THE Bible carries us back to the beginning of all things, and forward to the end of all things. Yet, when we read the first chapters of that venerable volume, we feel that we are dealing with events which have not the definiteness and clearness of modern history. We seem to be looking at a landscape partly obscured by mist, and the figures which we see have a weird outline, and do not appear like the men and women of to-day. But after the story of the flood there is at once a clearing up; we seem to be among men of the same race with ourselves, and we enter upon authentic and crystallized history. In Abraham we see a man whose features we can clearly trace, and from him the stream of events flows onward without a break. He is the founder, not alone of the Jewish history, but of all connected and undoubted history. We do not know the world of the first chapters of Genesis sufficiently well to trace the current of those dark and distant times. But we have no such difficulty with Abraham and with all who follow him.

At "Ur of the Chaldees," Abraham's first home, is then

the fountain-head to which we resort, in our effort to trace the sacred story, and to read the Bible by the light of its own scenery. The name Chaldea appears to have passed like the sands which the Euphrates carries to the sea, down from the highlands of Armenia to the neighborhood of the Persian gulf. In the oldest parts of the Bible the land of the Chaldees appears to have been near the head-waters of the Euphrates, while at the close of the Old Testament times, it has passed to the tract around Babylon. There have been many debates respecting the situation of "Ur of the Chaldees," and those who like Rawlinson have devoted themselves to studies in the district of the lower Euphrates, have decided that either Warka or Mugheir, great heaps of ruins, was the city whence Abraham migrated. The weight of evidence, turns the scale, in my judgment, in favor of the city now known as Oorfa, near the head-waters of the Euphrates, and some three or four hundred miles north-east of Palestine. Among the singular retributions of history is this, that the city which stands where Ur once stood, is now a station of the American Board, and the Gospel of Christ, and the story of Abraham's life are now sent back by a young nation of America to that ancient spot whence Abraham journeyed so long ago, taking with him the worship of a living and spiritual God. The place has always been noted for its profuse spring, and around that spring people have always clustered, and so Ur has never been without a history. In the period of classic Rome it was a large and well-known city called Edessa, and the modern Orfa or Oorfa is not a place without size and architectural adornment.

True to some divine intimation, Abraham, then a young man, took his aged father, and all the family possessions, and journeyed on to Haran. This place lay about twenty miles south of Ur, and was not a place of sufficient attractions to induce him to tarry long. It has not that profuse and exhaustless supply of water which enriched Ur, his childhood's home; but it has always been a place of some note in history.





THE MODERN CITY OF ORFA.

Which occupies the site of "Ur of the Chaldees." It is now a station of the American Board.

It has been and is a great place of meeting for the caravans journeying from Egypt and Syria to the Euphrates and the Tigris, and the roads which lead to Nineveh and Babylon and Damascus crossed at Haran. When Stephen was uttering his dying speech, he alluded to Abraham's journey to "Harran," as to a place well known to all who heard his words, and not far from the time when Stephen lived and died, this old Haran or Harran had been the scene of Crassus, a Roman general's defeat. It is therefore one of the clearly determinable landmarks of history. While some debate circles around "Ur of the Chaldees," none brings Haran into doubt. True, once in a while, an erratic and wrong-headed man like Dr. Beke, drags it into dispute, but the learned world agree almost to a man that Haran was near the Euphrates, at a point about three hundred and fifty miles north-east of the mountains of Gilead, east of the Jordan.

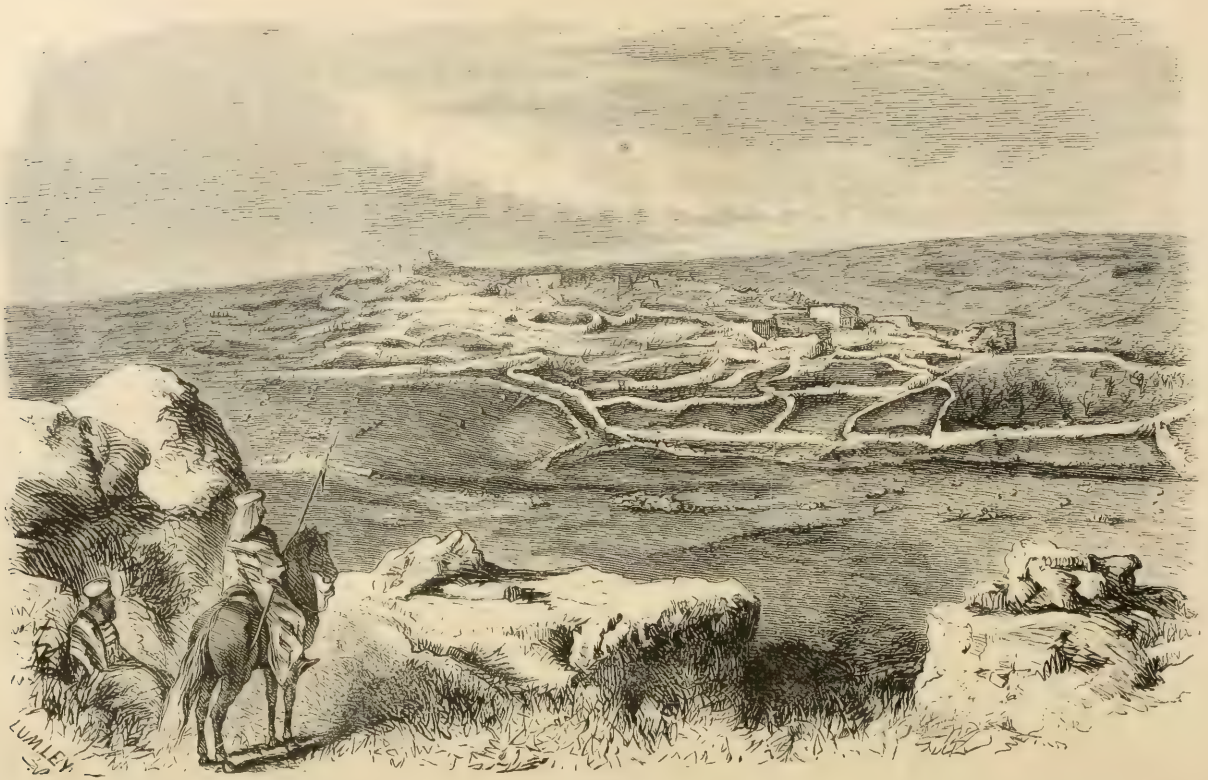
Leaving the body of his father Terah, Abraham once more journeyed forth. And this time he plunged at once into the desert, and directed his march towards a land distant a week's weary way, and over a country desolate and barren. It was a great thing to do; to take flocks and herds, and family and servants, and tents, and strike out into that desert, only to enter at last a land held by races of half savage men, from whom he could expect neither welcome nor sympathy. But he obeyed the "call;" he "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," and "he went out, not knowing whither he went." We can not trace him in the various stages of his journey, but we know that he must have passed by Damascus, for afterwards we find that his steward, his chief servant, was Eliezer of Damascus. That ancient city was built then, at the time of Abraham. Those mountain streams, which were fed by the dissolving snows of Hermon, then as now converted the otherwise arid plain into a garden, and allowed man to turn it into his uses and establish there a city. Damascus is a child of the mountain waters and the sand, united in marriage beneath that fervid Syrian sun.

Abraham comes into clear view at that peerless plain of Moreh or Shechem, as it was subsequently called, always one of the fairest scenes in Palestine. On one side towered the frowning Ebal even then, and on the other side, the smiling Gerizim. The plain was as winning then as it is now, and it kindled Abraham with such admiration, that he tarried there, and under one of its groves he builded an altar and worshiped his God. He did not come into violent collision with the inhabitants of the place,—his nature was too gentle and peaceful for that,—but he made no long stay there, and still journeyed on toward the south.

His next halting place was hard by a place which had no note then, but which was afterwards in connection with Abraham's grandson, to become one of the hallowed spots of the world. Near Bethel, between it and the walled city of Hai or Ai, which was afterwards to be one of the first to fall before the victorious arms of Joshua, was a high ridge, on the summit of which Abraham tarried again. He had passed from a rich and smiling valley to the comparatively sterile hill country of Central Palestine. It was not such a spot as the beautiful Moreh or Shechem, which he had left behind; it was not of course desolate and barren as it is in its neglect and misrule to-day, but it was no pleasant, attractive place. It was there that he felt the hard pressure of famine, for Palestine was then as now a land of precarious fortunes, liable to that great scourge, of which we know so little, an almost entire failure of the crops. The world is so bound together now, that the want of one region is at once and without observation, compensated by the increased supply of some other region, and so we know little or nothing of suffering from famine. But it was not so in the past, nor is it so now in lands out of the regular march of civilization. In those ancient days, Egypt was the one unfailing source of supply. Its certain inundation gave it every year just that amount of virgin soil, and its never failing waters secured it that kind of irrigation which made the crops as sure as the return of the

year, and all the lands on the north-east, east, and west of Egypt, Palestine, Arabia Petræa and Libya, looked to Egypt for bread when their own supplies failed. And so when on those uplands near Bethel where Abraham had built another altar, the crops gave no return, he took his flocks and herds and household and went down into the Nile country. Remaining there till the famine was past, he returned to the neighborhood of Bethel.

He was then a rich man, "very rich in cattle and in silver and in gold." His flocks had increased to that degree that the upland was not able to afford them sustenance, and it was necessary to divide the country between himself and his nephew, Lot. With that fine courtesy which always distinguished him, and as the older and stronger giving the better opportunity to the younger, he surveyed with Lot all the land from that high ridge. Down at their feet, at the east, could be seen the fertile plain of the Jordan, not arid and desolate as now, with a dense jungle along the banks the only vegetation, but a well watered and verdant plain, terminated at the south by the luxuriant shores of the Dead Sea. That sea was not then a scene of wild and repulsive desolation, but was a gem of blue in a setting of emerald; its coast studded with opulent cities, and all its surroundings as beautiful as they are now ghastly. Southward could be seen the hills of Southern Palestine, northward the peaks of Galilee, and far in the background, the lofty and snowy summit of Hermon. It was, and still is, a splendid panorama. This Abraham proposed to divide with Lot. With that rare and winning gentleness of his, he said, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." Lot, with a greedy desire to secure the best, at once selected the Jordan plain, and went down into it, and ever after lived



BETHEL.

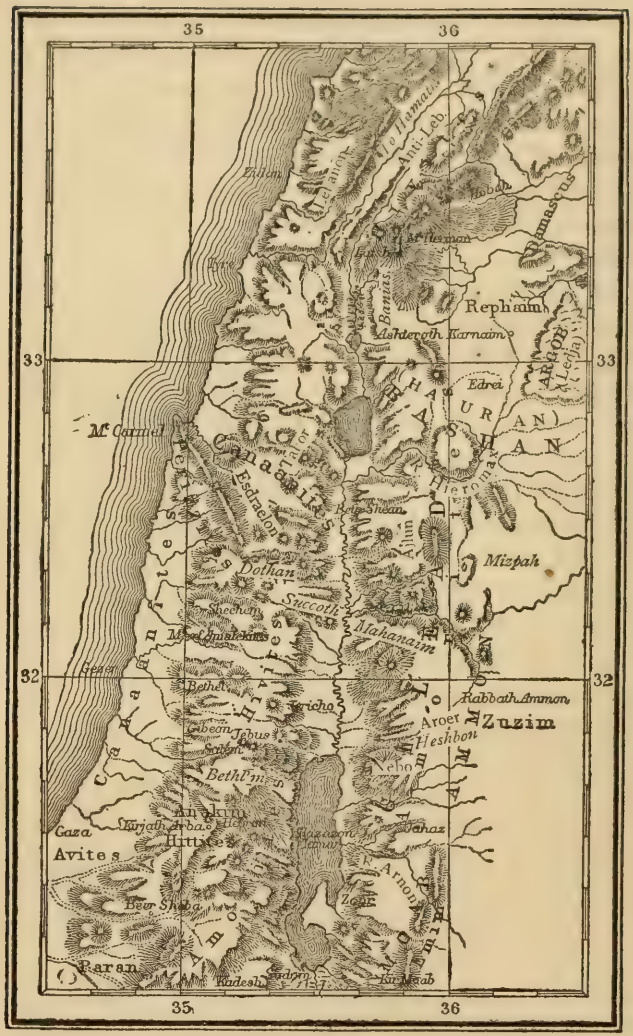
This wild spot was one of the most sacred of places from Abraham's time, down. Here Jacob dreamed that he saw the ladder which reached to Heaven, etc., and set up his pillow of stone, as a pillar of testimony of his vow to the Lord.

From an Original Photograph in the Possession of the Author

there and on the borders of the Dead Sea. But the future proved that in his haste he had overleaped, and chosen badly. For in that fervid and steaming climate, men always degenerate, and the Arabs now living in the Ghor or deep Jordan valley are among the lowest of their name. Lot's lineage blended afterwards with the people of that region, and became the Moabites and the wild Ammonites, but they shared all the ill fortune which fell upon the wickedness of the Dead Sea cities, and became entangled in all their misfortunes. Abraham on the other hand, became the possessor of the breezy and invigorating hill-tops, having a hardy soil, indeed, and a rougher climate, but having those qualities which produce able and rugged manhood, and which saved his stock from premature decay. Just as New England's soil and climate have been the vigorous nursing mother of a stalwart race, so did Abraham's possessions, though apparently the less propitious, make his fortune much the better.

From the halting place near Bethel, Abraham moved southward to the neighborhood of Hebron, the place named in Scripture the "Plains of Mamre." It was doubtless hard by the present city of Hebron, for the unvarying voice of tradition and the hints which the Scriptures give us, make it certain that it was there where Abraham tarried. The place was probably the high upland in the rear of modern Hebron, and his flocks and herds may have found pasturage in the fertile valleys near by. Hebron was then a city, one of the most ancient cities of the world, and giving tokens, like Damascus, that it had note and mark even then. The tribe of Hittites occupied it then, and in the neighborhood were some of those giants, whose names have been preserved in the Scriptures, but of whom we know little but the names.

It was while Abraham dwelt near Hebron, that the invasion of the "Kings of the East" occurred, recounted in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. The story is one on which the reader does not generally linger, for the popular ignorance of sacred geography is so great, that a narrative like that, em-


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Rephaim
Mt Carmel
Dothan
Succoth
Mahanaim
Mizpah
Jericho
Aroer
Zuzim
Heshbon
Rabbath Ammon
Gaza
Avites
Hittites
Paran
Kadesh
Edrei
Ashteroth Karnaim
Beth Shean
Jahaz
Zoar
Kir Moab

bracing so many of these grotesque and unpronounceable Hebrew names, is usually jumped in the perusal. Nevertheless, the patient reader, who will take the pains to study that chapter will find his reward. It is a graphic and admirable narrative of great events, and if we will but decipher it as we would the story of the Franco-Prussian war, we shall find it as clear as the story of that campaign.

The lower course of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was then bordered by tribes of rude men, under the control of chieftains whose names have been preserved. That region embraced the Plains of Shinar, and became a part of the later provinces of Chaldea and Babylonia. It was then in the rudimentary stage of its history. The nearest rivals of these chieftains, on the west, were the five kings of the five cities of the Dead Sea Plain, Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. These cities stood at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, as Wolcott has conclusively shown. The whole region was one of great fertility. That salty tract of varying breadth which stretched southward from six to ten miles, from the Dead Sea to the base of the hills and cliffs, was then a beautiful and verdurous plain. It was covered with population and studded with cities. Zoar stood on or near the peninsula of Lisan, which extends into the Dead Sea from the eastern side. Just where the other cities were we do not know, but tradition places Sodom at the southern extremity of the lake. The general appearance of the sea was then as it is now, although it was by no means so bitter and repulsive to the taste as now, for the Jordan has been pouring in its brackish waters for thousands of years, while evaporation has continually been going on, and the brine has been growing stronger and stronger. All the salts which have been dissolved for ages from the soil of Palestine, are now in the bitter waters of the Dead Sea, for there is no outlet, and evaporation carries off what is absolutely pure, leaving all that is acrid behind.

The tongue of land known as the Lisan, which juts into the

Dead Sea from the east, divides it into two parts which are entirely different. The northern one embraces about two-thirds of the entire area, the southern, the remaining one-third. The depth of the northern part is very great, about 1,312 feet, and it is 1,100 feet deep a mere cable length from the mouth of the Arnon. From the steep cliffs in the east, the coast sinks away at once to those great distances. But the average depth of the southern portion is but 18 feet, and there is a large part that can be forded with perfect ease. Indeed it is said that in the early part of the present century, two English travelers went on foot from the Lisan peninsula across the lower arm of the Dead Sea. It has been supposed by Robinson and others who have blindly followed him, that that was "the plain" of Scripture, and that in the great catastrophe of Sodom it was submerged; and indeed the bitumen sometimes found floating on the water, and the scanty depth, do give a certain color to the conjecture, but the studies of the best geologists who have explored that region, do not confirm it, and it is now considered to be beyond doubt, that the physical character of the Dead Sea has not been changed by any violent convulsion of nature, within the limits of human history.

The course of the five kings who came from the plains around the lower Euphrates, was unquestionably up that river many hundreds of miles, to a point where it is but a week's journey or less across the desert to the uplands of Syria and then down the central mountain land of Palestine. To have gone directly across the great desert from the lower Euphrates to the Dead Sea would have been madness. No other course was feasible but the long, circuitous route already indicated. They descended on the kings of the five cities of the plain and brought them into immediate subjection. That subjection continued for thirteen years, but in the fourteenth the conquered kings on the shore of the Dead Sea rebelled, and Chedorlaomer and the other three chieftains from Shinar, were compelled to come once more and do their work over

again. Their course this time was down through the highlands of Palestine east of the Jordan. They first vanquished the stalwart Rephaims, whose capitol was Ashteroth Karnaim, thence advancing southward they conquered successively the two powerful tribes of Zuzims and Emims, who held the district east and north-east of the Dead Sea, the precursors of the Moabites and Ammonites afterwards to come, they then fell upon the inhabitants of the Seir or Edom range extending from the Dead Sea to the eastern arm of the Red Sea and brought them into subjection, then doubling that range, they passed up along its western base, attacking and overcoming the fierce Amalekites, that notable tribe of Arabs who held the northern edge of the Sinaitic wilderness, and lastly fell upon one of the old tribes of Palestine, the warlike Amorites, who lived in the rocky and sterile region west of the Dead Sea. They smote them at a place then called Hazezon-tamar, but afterwards better known as Engedi, the place to which David fled from Saul, and where he wrote two at least of his most moving psalms. The place is still known as Ain Jidy, the old name differently spelled, but still pronounced like Engedi.

Reaching this spot, they were attacked by the five kings of the cities near by, but to no avail. The men of the plain were vanquished by the invaders from the east, and among those who were taken prisoner and whose goods were seized, were Lot and his household. A messenger was at once despatched to carry the tidings to his uncle Abraham at Hebron, but a few miles across the country. At once the old sheikh, touched by the strong tie of kin, so potent in the east, started in pursuit of the flying invaders. We get a glimpse of him and his well-trained servants, three hundred and eighteen in number, at Dan, near the sources of Jordan. Abraham overtook them at Hobah, near Damascus, and falling upon them in the night, routed them completely, and rescued those whom he wished to save. His return was that of a conqueror. Melchisedek, the king of Salem, a man, who like Abraham, had learned in some unknown way, the worship of a spiritual

God, came forth to meet him, and blessed him and spread before him a noble feast. Who this man was, and where he lived, we do not know. It has been conjectured that Salem was the subsequent Jerusalem, but that we do not know.

The closing years of Abraham's life were spent in Beersheba and in the region adjacent, to be more particularly described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

JACOB AND THE "SOUTH COUNTRY."

Change in the Character of the Country—Hills give place to Rolling Land—Grass Appears—This Land the Last Resting-place of Abraham and the Home of Isaac—This Region not yet Thoroughly Explored—Wells still a subject of Contention—The Real Home of the Patriarchs—Hagar—Hebron and the Cave of Machpelah—Prince of Wales' Examination of it—Jacob's Embalmed Body probably there now—Jacob's Wanderings "in Search of a Wife"—His Return to Palestine—Shechem—The Death and Burial-place of Rachel.

SOUTH of Beersheba the hills fade away, and are lost in the rolling country which stretches onward to the distant mountain-land lying on the northern part of the great Et Tih plateau. As one passes up from the Sinaitic Wilderness into the hill country of Palestine, he notices, in the last twenty miles before reaching Beersheba, the symptoms of a change. The aromatic shrubs of the desert gradually disappear, and grass takes its place. There are no trees, and yet the ground loses its almost fearfully sterile look, and begins to put on the first indications of fertility. Of all the travelers who have written of this south country, no other one has traced its features with the tender fidelity of Bonar, the Scotch poet and preacher, in his "Desert of Sinai" and "Land of Promise,"—both excellent and admirable works.

Not that there is much that can detain the traveler for any length of time: its resources are very slight, and its features are not striking. Yet, as the home of Abraham for an exceedingly attractive part of his life, as the home of Isaac and of Jacob for a part of theirs, it is one of the most interesting regions mentioned in the Bible. It is not yet, strange to say,

thoroughly explored. While there is scarcely a wady between Dan and Beersheba which has not been examined with a certain degree of care, the south country is known only as it has been traversed by the caravan routes of the desert. The two hasty tours made a few years ago by Rev. Mr. Rowland, in search of Kadesh, lasting but three or four days each, are almost the only ones which have been made south of Beersheba, except by those who have had occasion to cross the region. And discredited as Mr. Rowland apparently must be, in respect to his alleged discovery of the site of Kadesh, and the fancied identification of the well which he encountered in the desert with the one which Hagar stumbled upon when famished and at the door of death, still the remarks which he makes show, that, in spite of the distempered enthusiasm with which he recounts his explorations, there is a rich field for the researches of a learned, careful, and zealous man. Yet, even with such exploration, there is no startling mystery in that south country which will be brought to light. We know, almost beyond question, that the country where Abraham lived was at Beersheba and in its immediate vicinity; that Isaac went westward to Gerar, and digged his numerous wells up and down the course of Wady Sheriah, a broad and shallow water-course a few miles south-east of Gaza, and running toward the latter city. Very careful research might bring to light the wells which the provident and domestic Isaac digged, —the sources of such frequent controversy between his herdsmen and those of the Philistine king. Even to the present day, wells are the most valuable possession of the Arab tribes; and no contentions are so prolonged or so bitter as those which are held in respect to their possession. But, of all the wells of the whole region, no two come so prominently forward as Beersheba, the favorite residence of Abraham and Jacob, and Beer-lahai-roi, the place around which Isaac loved to call together his flocks. Mr. Rowland, in his hasty tour through the south country, discovered a well some distance south of Wady Sheriah, the ancient Valley of Gerar, bearing the name

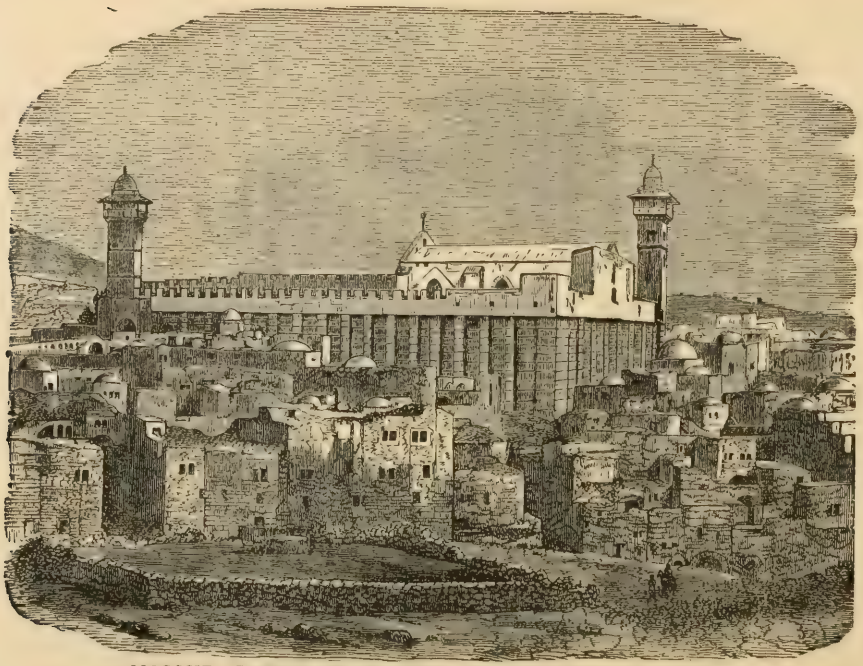


THE EXPULSION OF HAGAR.

Moilahi. This, from the resemblance in the names, he conjectured to be Hagar and Isaac's Lahai-roi. It is scarcely possible that this was the case. The country where Rowland made his early discoveries is too barren to have been attractive to a good husbandman like Isaac: he would have chosen the more fertile land south of Gaza, and in fact encroaching some distance upon what was the subsequent territory of the Philistines. The retem or juniper-bush grows there now just as it did in the olden time; and it affords a scanty shelter from the sun's rays to the Arab of to-day, just as it did to Elijah, while he was on his pilgrimage to Horeb, and had advanced a day's journey south of Beersheba.

Here, then, in this half-fertile, half-desert tract, was the real home of the patriarchs. South of it was the wilderness, the subsequent scene of their descendants' trials and protracted wanderings. North of it was the home of the Canaanites, the powerful and partly civilized descendants of Ham. With the patriarchal families we see mingled rival lords of the soil, the Abimelechs, wandering princes also, men who lived in tents, and possessed vast flocks and herds. Abraham did not attempt to dispossess the strong tribes which he found lying between Dan and Beersheba: but after tarrying briefly at Shechem, Bethel, and Hebron, he went a few miles farther south, to the open country, where there were no walled cities; and here he and his sons and his sons' sons led their roving, pastoral life. We trace Hagar passing beyond that desert where she famished, making her abode for a season in Egypt, and securing a wife there for her son Ishmael; but none of the descendants (Gen. xxv.) work their way northward into the land of the Canaanites: they go south-eastward into the hills and plains, and become the fathers of those wandering Arabs, who perpetuate, in the smallest details, the peculiarities of the time when Ishmael led his roving life. The other descendants of Abraham, his sons by Keturah (Gen. xxv.), went farther away; and we find them and their successors in the most fertile parts of Arabia Felix. Isaac remains at Beersheba and

Mamre, and in the Vale of Gerar, a little westward, never leaving that region but once, and then when his father carried him for sacrifice to Moriah. Allusion may be made here to the rock-tomb which Abraham purchased of the Hittite tribe, and which was directly before those oaks of Mamre which for thirteen years sheltered Abraham's tents. The upland of Mamre is passed now by the traveler directly after leaving Hebron and going northward, itself bare and possessed of little that is striking or interesting, saving a great oak, a vivid reminder of the terebinth under which Abraham refreshed himself. But the grave has had a more splendid destiny than the shaded spot where Abraham lived. There is no doubt whatever that the place where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah, were buried, is now sacredly guarded within the mosque at Hebron. It is one of those places which are equally revered at the present time by Jew, Mahometan, and Christian; and there has been not a year nor a day since the time of Abraham when that rock-tomb has been exposed to desecration, or when a guard has not been set over it. From the time when Abraham purchased it, down all the centuries of the Old Covenant, it remained in the hands of the Jews. The Christians then gained possession of it; then the Mahometans grasped it: but the patriarchs, and especially Abraham, were beloved in their eyes, and it suffered no detriment. The Christians held it again for the little season in which the Crusaders were victorious, and then relinquished it once more into the hands of the Moslems. These hold it today, as must be said to the shame of the Christian world. There is but one race which should possess and keep that hallowed tomb,—the Jews themselves. It ought, indeed, to be freely open to the Gentile world,—to those who, though not of Abrahamic lineage, yet revere his memory, and accept the Christian fulfilling of his faith; and yet it is owed to the Jews that it be taken from those who hold it now in their foul and unseemly clutch, and given to the descendants of the ancient patriarchs. Happily, the strong arm of the British govern-



MOSQUE AT HEBRON (MACHPELAH) AND PART OF TOWN.

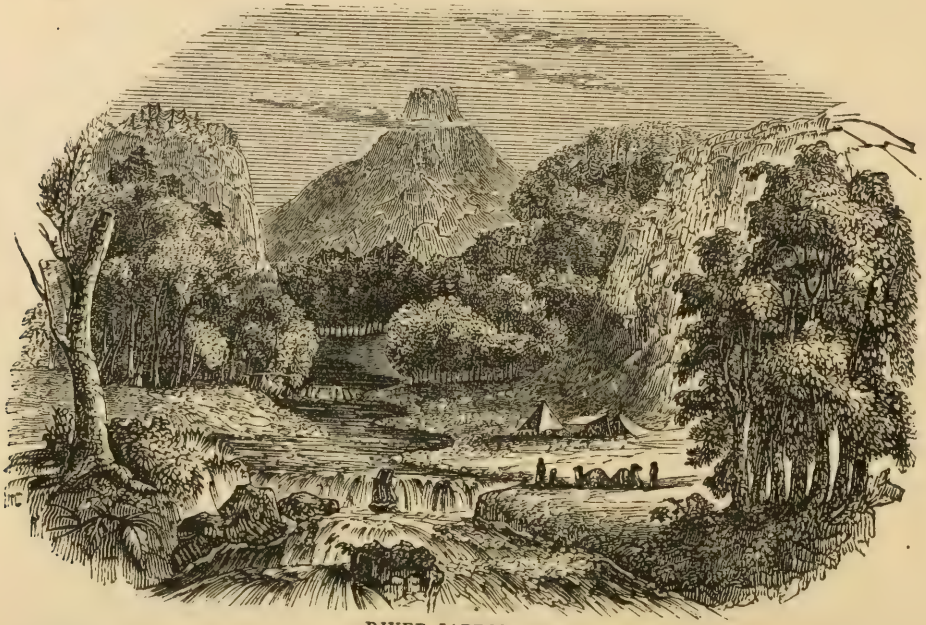
Beneath the oldest part of the great Mosque, rests the bones of the ancient Hebrew patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Sarah, Rebekah and Leah were also buried here. There are few if any of the ancient sites of Palestine of whose genuineness we can feel more assured than *Machpelah*. The ancient Jewish tradition ascribes the erection of the Mosque to David.

ment has wrested within our days what assuredly would not have been given; and the Prince of Wales, accompanied by a small and chosen party of friends and scholars, has been permitted to go as far as some might perhaps consider it seemly under any circumstances to advance. It is true, they did not enter the cave itself. The darkened shrines which bear the names of the ancient patriarchs and their wives, and which are jealously guarded by the Moslem keepers, are directly over the tomb; yet, in that part of the mosque which is called the shrine of Abraham, the royal party saw a hole about eight inches across, which leads directly into the cave below. Every night, a lamp is lowered into the vault, but it is withdrawn by day. The original entrance is closed by masonry, but was doubtless on the southern face of the hill, and so situated that Abraham, as he sat under his oaks, could look fully into it. The student who may wish to trace the architectural history of the mosque will find it fully detailed in Ritter's work on the Holy Land, vol. iii. pp. 305 *et seq.*; and no one can fail to be instructed by the graphic narrative which Dean Stanley, one of the Prince of Wales' party, has given of the royal visit in 1862. It is not to be forgotten, that the great earnestness to penetrate the cave of Machpelah is peculiar, it would seem, to the Christian nations of the present day. The pasha of Jerusalem, who yielded the right of entrance to the English party, expressed wonder at their curiosity, and said that "he had never thought of visiting the mosque for any other purpose than snuffing the sacred air." Yet it may be doubted whether, in case a strong curiosity should prompt a Mahometan to descend, he would dare to; for Quaresmius tells us "that, early as the seventh century, it was firmly believed, that, if any Mussulman entered the cavern, immediate death would be the consequence." I trust, however, that the growing weakness of the Turkish government will allow of even more perfect exploration. It is not too much to say, that, in a good measure of probability, the body of Jacob, embalmed as it was in Egypt, is in as perfect condition there to-day as are the

mummies which are disinterred on the Nile; and, it may be, the first layers of the masonry to be still seen at Hebron were laid by Joseph himself, on the occasion of his father's sumptuous funeral. That this is no idle fancy is shown by the wealth and power of the man, whose father had been a Hebrew shepherd, but who had wrought out his fortune with such signal success in Egypt. Here Joseph had become habituated to magnificent sepulchers, as well as to sumptuous sepultures; and after that costly pageantry of burial described so strikingly in the closing chapter of Genesis, it is hardly to be supposed that he would fail to designate, with some architectural memorial, the simple rock-grave which his great-grandfather purchased, and which for three generations had lain in its original rudeness.

Jacob's return to the land of his forefathers, that he might take a wife from his own family and not from strangers, brings Haran momentarily into view again; and not Haran only, but one or two other places which have already become familiar to us in connection with Abraham's wanderings. He leaves Beersheba, the home of his childhood; but he leaves it not to return to its comparative bareness, and the scanty resources which it had yielded to Abraham and Isaac. We find him living farther north, in the fertile vale of Hebron and on the fruitful plain of Shechem, but no more in the south country. His way led him from his childhood's home, along the great ridge which runs north and southward all the way from Dan to Beersheba. We get no glimpse of him till he reaches Bethel, the same place already noticed, the Luz of a former time, on a mountain directly east of which Abraham and Lot stood when they surveyed the whole country, and divided it between themselves. On one of the stones of that still wild and rocky spot, Jacob pillowed his head, and saw in his dream the ladder that reached to the stars. On he went,—no names of places given us,—and came to the distant Mesopotamia, "the land of the people of the East," and at last greeted his kinsmen of Haran. Near the home of his grandfather, he

wrought his fourteen years' service, and at last returned, no longer a solitary shepherd with crook and staff alone, but a man of substance. His flight with his wives and herds carried him, not, as before, past the foot of Hermon, and not far from Damascus, but south-westward, direct toward the mountains of Gilead, a distance of three hundred and fifty miles. This natural defense he reached on the seventh day. The hight Mizpah, where he made his covenant with Laban, was long considered a sacred spot, and the cairn erected there testified to the historical interest of the place. It is not known with certainty at the present time where was that Mizpah, one of the many whose names are scattered through the Bible, and all of them designating a lofty natural watch-tower; but there is but little doubt that it lay on the eastern part of the Gilead range. Thence Jacob passed westward to the site of his next encampment, Mahanaim. This place, the scene of that "wrestling" which has given its own name to the Jabbok River, is familiarly known. It can be readily seen from any high point near the plain of Esdraelon. The eye, tracing the Jabbok from its confluence without the Jordan eastward, sees with distinctness, even at a considerable distance, the cleft which the river makes through the great rock wall which runs parallel with the Jordan, on the eastern bank, from its source to its mouth. On this ravine, but a half-day's march from the Jordan, was Mahanaim. From this point Jacob sent his messengers southward to the mountains of Seir, the possession of his brother Esau, to greet and propitiate that powerful chieftain. Instead of bringing back a peaceful response, the martial brother, having already subdued the powerful Horites, who formerly inhabited Seir, headed his bands and rushed northward, as if with the object of checking Jacob's advance. I need not remind the reader of the fear of the younger brother, of the rich present sent to propitiate the elder, of the sudden revulsion in the mind of the impulsive Esau, and the peaceful interview of the chieftains. Esau and Jacob part on the borders of the Jabbok for the last



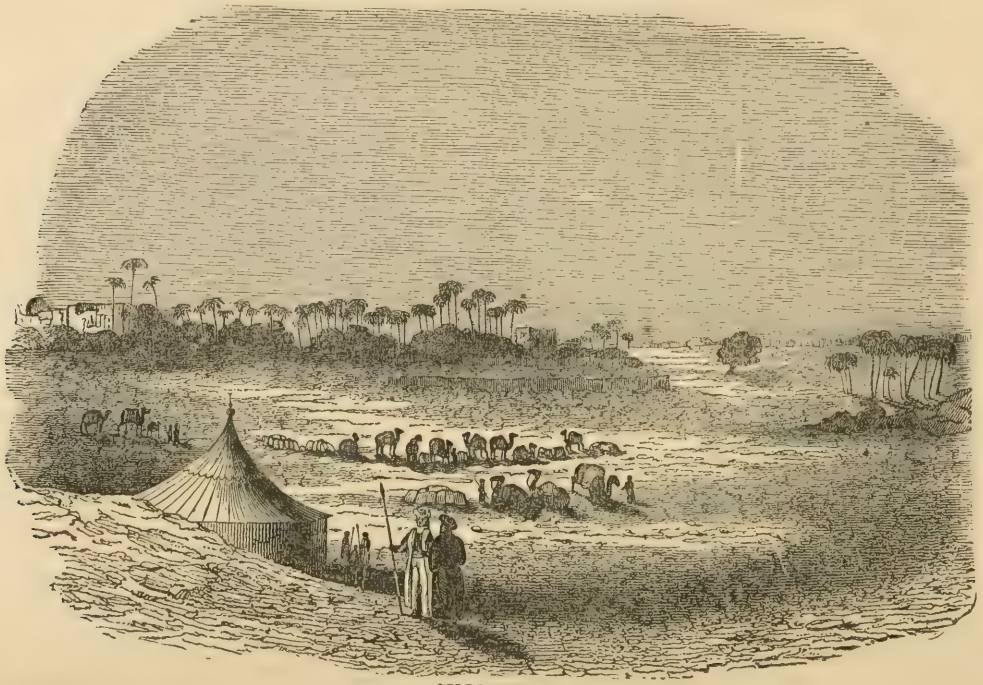
RIVER JABBOK.

This spirited engraving gives a vivid view of the romantic valley of the Jabbok, its dense woods and dashing waters.

time; the former returns with his retinue to his own mountains, the latter crosses the brook, then follows its course to the Jordan, and lodges at Succoth. Here he does not erect tents; he is passing into a higher stage of life. Succoth means "booths;" and the place, thousands of years subsequently, the scene of Lynch's encampment on the Jordan, testifies in its very etymology that there, on Israel's real entering the promised land as a nation, the day of tents and nomadic wanderings had passed away for ever.

From Succoth, near the confluence of the Jabbok and the Jordan, there are wadies, or gorges, running north-westward to the plain of Esdraelon and westward to the neighborhood of Shechem. The course which Jacob then took is one which has been frightfully familiar to the people of Palestine ever since. Down that cleft which he followed, over that same ford where he crossed the Jordan, and up the wadies, are even now, and have always been, the ravaging courses of those terrible Arabs who come from the east, and who are so much fiercer than any who are met in Palestine, or in the Sinai Peninsula. It is that open door eastward which now makes the rich vale of Esdraelon little better than a waste of flowers, uncut grass, and rank weeds; no man dares till it; for with the approach of harvest the Arabs would come up from across the Ghor, by Jacob's former path, and bring terror to man and destruction to every growing thing. And so it will be, so long as the present inefficient government holds sway,—a government so notoriously deficient in the power to protect its people that a land which once supported eight millions of souls now meagerly gives sustenance to one-tenth of that number.

Shechem, that loveliest of all the vales of Palestine, wrought the same effect upon Jacob that it had done upon Abraham. As we find the grandfather tarrying at the plain of Moreh, and building an altar there; so, under its changed name of Shechem, we see that it wins the grandson just as cordially.



SUCCOTH.

At this stage in their journey trees were found, out of which the Israelites made the "booths" which gave the place its name.

It was doubtless inhabited in Abraham's day, but of its earlier tenants we do not hear, enough that Abraham went southward before coming into collision with them. And there, by the side of that well which Jacob digged, and which, little changed, can be seen to-day, the shrewd, careful man could have lived without serious contention as well as Isaac lived in the valley of Gerar, far to the south. But this was not to be. The strivings of Isaac's herdsmen with those of Abimelech were easily pacified, in comparison with the feuds which the turbulent sons of Jacob stirred up with the Canaanites, who possessed the valley of Shechem. The cautious and peace-loving patriarch preferred to withdraw to a less favored spot, to the vale of Hebron, which his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac had loved. His journey southward took him past a site already sacred in his memory, the Luz, or Bethel, where that wonderful vision of angels ascending and descending came to him as he lay beneath the stars. He, as well as his grandfather before him, appears to have always passed around that strong rock where the Jebusites lived, little conscious of its great destiny, and only once coming into momentary sight as the home of Melchisedek, whence he goes forth to greet Abraham after his victory over the kings of the East. But, south of the Jerusalem that was to be, Jacob came to a place which was to witness his greatest sorrow. On the highland a little north of Bethlehem, at a place called Ephrath, Rachel died and was buried. The place of her burial, kept in remembrance by successive structures, one of which, of comparatively modern construction, can be seen even now, is unquestionably authentically preserved. She could not be carried to Hebron, it would seem; she must be buried by the wayside, where she fell. The next stage brings him to familiar ground, to Hebron and Mamre, and they become his home till his visit to Egypt. His sons do not appear to have repressed the wish to return and feed their flocks on the far richer and more extensive pasture-lands of the north; and we find them once more on that fertile plain of Shechem, tending



JACOB'S WELL.

Giving with great fidelity the plain of Shechem, and the surroundings of the "Well."

From an Original Photograph in the possession of the Author

their flocks, while Joseph goes ten miles farther north-eastward to Dothan, just on the southern border of the vale of Esdraelon. This place was brought to light by Robinson and Van de Velde, only fifteen years ago; the traces of the great ancient road running southward toward Egypt being still discernible.

CHAPTER III.

EGYPT, AND THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

Egypt the Mother of Civilization—Sesostris—The Land of Goshen—Its Boundaries—Occupations of the Hebrew Slaves—The Treasure Cities—Succoth—Etham—The Natural Route of the Israelites—Why they made their Detour—The Head of the Red Sea—The Places near it—The Crossing of the Gulf of Suez—Dr. Bonar and Dr. Robinson on the Miracle wrought there.



HE scene of the Bible story now passes from Palestine to Egypt. That strip of land, but a few miles wide, and lining the banks of the Nile with emerald, was the mother of civilization. Zoan, in Egypt, lying east of the Tanitic mouth of the Nile, is referred to in the Bible as one of the most ancient cities in the world, and the rise of Egyptian civilization antedates all authentic history. The power of that nation culminated during the time of the Hebrew sojourn in that country; Sesostris, the greatest and most formidable of the Egyptian monarchs, being almost unquestionably one of the Pharaohs who ruled while the Jews were in Goshen. It brings our subject out from the shadowy vagueness which might seem to rest upon it, to remember that in all great collections of Egyptian antiquities, such as that at Berlin, for example, the features of that mighty monarch are preserved, colossal in size, but perfectly well kept, and unquestionably authentic. Not that Rameses the Great, or Sesostris, as the Greeks called him, was the king of Egypt when Joseph went down into that country; not that he was the Pharaoh who resisted Moses' demands; he lived between Joseph and Moses, and was one of those kings whose stern hand crushed the chosen people. The royal residences were at Memphis, a



PRESENTATION OF MOSES TO PHARAOH.

From a beautiful English painting by Chapman.

little south of Cairo, and near the pyramids (to be seen on those plains even in Abraham's time), and at Zoan, east of the Tanitic mouth of the Nile. The sacred city, the seat of learning, the place where Joseph found his wife, and where Moses was educated, was at On, or Heliopolis, about ten miles north-east of Cairo; its remains are to be discerned even at the present day, though in a state of great decay. The tract which most interests us, however, is Goshen. The various hints of the Bible, when brought together and compared, enable us to determine the location of that fertile tract. It was unquestionably within the Lower Delta; it was the country which lay between the capitals of Egypt and Palestine; it was the tract on the extreme eastern frontier of the kingdom; it was but three days' journey from the Red Sea; it embraced some one or more of the Nile mouths. As we learn from Ps. lxxviii. 12, 43, Zoan was within Goshen, and this city lay even west of the Pelusiac mouth of the Nile. The repeated references to the use of the river take away all doubt about a portion of the Israelites' dwelling upon its shores. The fish which they ate, the food which they raised, and which is found profusely where the inundations occur, as well as the express allusions to watering the ground with the foot, make it certain that the western border of Goshen was on the river. The distinct statement that it was but a three-days' march from one of the cities to the sea proves, on the other hand, that the district extended a considerable distance to the eastward, and embraced no inconsiderable share of that comparatively infertile country where the desert sands and the luxuriant Nile Valley struggle for supremacy. Its southern limit evidently came down well-nigh to On, or Heliopolis, about ten miles north, as already intimated, of the present city of Cairo; for Joseph says, in the message which he sends to Jacob (Gen. xlv. 10), "Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near me." When the patriarchal family and the dependants came down to Egypt, Joseph goes forth "to meet Israel, his father, to Goshen," showing that



THE SPHINX AND PYRAMIDS OF MEMPHIS.

the district lay between the capital and southern Palestine. That tract, which even in its present neglect manifests that it is "the best in the land," was well adapted to a race of herdsmen; and the abundant pasturage which the Hebrews' flocks would find would even surpass what had been seen on the fruitful plains of Shechem. The Hebrews were useful as a kind of breakwater against the irruptions of wild Bedouin tribes; and as they themselves were Bedouin in their characteristics, they would be skilled in all the arts of a half-civilized warfare. They were, therefore, of the very highest service to their Egyptian masters, for the inroads of wild Asiatic tribes constituted one of the greatest scourges of Egyptian civilization. In the Greek translation of the Bible made in Egypt by the Seventy, while the memory of the old history was yet fresh, the word translated "treasure-cities," in the account of the works which the Hebrew bondmen wrought, is rendered "fortified cities," as if in allusion to the need of protection against inroads on the eastern frontier. Two of those cities are expressly named,—Rameses and Pithom. It may be that archæologists are mistaken in their alleged identification of the sites of those two cities, yet the physical character of the country makes it impossible to mistake their approximate situation. A little north of Cairo, the lines of long parallel limestone cliffs which accompany the river northward to this point recede from each other, and allow space for the Delta,—one of the lines of cliffs running away to the north-east, the other to the north-west. At one point, nearly east of the spot where the Pelusiac branch of the Nile diverges, there is a narrow break in this line of cliffs, and a valley may be traced eastward to the so-called Bitter Lakes of Suez. Excellent pasturage still extends up this valley, and here, on the extreme border of what was Egypt proper, and at the door of a natural avenue into the Nile Valley, the cities of Rameses and Pithom were built. Subsequent ages have recognized the value of that same natural communication, and the canal which has been recently opened is the third on the same line

which has connected the Nile and the Red Sea. Here, and here alone, in this valley the rich basin of the Nile shades away by imperceptible gradations into the desert. Elsewhere the line between fertility and sterility is one strictly drawn: here it is not. And thus it was in the time of the Exodus, when the Israelites exchanged the rank luxuriance of the Nile country for Succoth, the place of scant herbage, the place of "booths," and then for Etham, "on the edge of the wilderness." Here transition is manifestly depicted; but this transition is only to be found in this valley. Those who have put Goshen further south, near Cairo, have not only to contend with the impossibility of passing in those days down to the Gulf of Suez, but also with the want of that gradual shading away of Goshen into the wilderness which the allusions to Succoth and Etham bring into view.

The exact locality of these places, as well as of those in the immediate vicinity of the Red Sea, is not known. Rameses almost unquestionably lay at the western opening of the valley that runs eastward to the Bitter Lakes. A collection of ruins is pointed out near to the village of Abbasah, which our countryman, Rev. Dr. Samson, one of the most careful observers who have investigated the subject, believes to be the remains of Rameses. No one wishing to investigate exhaustively the geography of Goshen and its treasure-cities of Rameses and Pithom can pass over Dr. Samson's contributions to "The Christian Review" for 1849 and 1850. From that point it is a three days' journey, thirty-five miles, to the head of the Gulf. The first day's journey brought them to Succoth, a place whose name, signifying booths, sufficiently indicates its most striking physical character. Doubtless here they parted with civilization, and passed from houses to tents, by the transitional use, for a night, of structures which should partake of the nature of both, and be protected, it may be, with a thin covering of leaves. It is easy even now to see where such an encampment would be naturally reared, and equally easy it is to mark the spot which is "on the edge of the

wilderness." This line has no doubt shifted to a certain extent within four thousand years; yet it may be approximately made out; and where the grass ceased utterly, there was Etham.

The natural course of the Israelites was not directly toward the Red Sea; it lay north of it, and was unquestionably known to their leader. Moses had been over the ground before, possibly often; for the Egyptians had a mining colony in Arabia, not far from Mt. Sinai, and the way thither was a well-beaten track. It formed no part of his plan, however, to lead the people up to the Promised Land by the route which had been taken by Abraham when four centuries before he had come down to Egypt for bread; which had been taken too by the Midianites when they brought Joseph down; by the sons of Jacob and by Jacob himself when they came down; and by Joseph when he carried his father's body up to Hebron in that imposing procession which has been described in the closing chapter of Genesis: this was a direct route running north-eastward, not far from the Mediterranean coast, and not passing within many miles of the Red Sea. The reason why that route was not taken is explicitly stated in the Scriptures. (Ex. xiii. 17, 18.) "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." Their direction was toward the south-east, instead of toward the north-east. The long *détour* which Moses proposed led him through territory with which he was perfectly familiar. Forty years of his life had been passed in that desert country, and even now a secluded dell close by the traditional Mt. Sinai bears the name of Moses' father-in-law. The real home of the Midianites was on the eastern side of the eastern arm of the Red Sea, it is true; but the nomadic habits of those days took Jethro and his tribe west of the Gulf of

Akabah, and permitted them to look for pasturage even in the central granitic ridge where the law was afterward given to Moses. The whole country was doubtless as familiar to the Hebrew lawgiver as it is now to any Arab sheik; he knew every wady, every spring, every mountain, every place of pasturage. Mt. Serbal, the most imposing, though by no means the loftiest, mountain of the peninsula, had long been a hallowed place. It had been the resort of Phœnician and Philistine worshipers even before Moses' day, and was doubtless the goal of that pretended pilgrimage which Moses asked permission of Pharaoh to make (Ex. viii. 27): "We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God."

In view of the fact that Moses proposed to enter Palestine by a long *détour*, in order that the training of the desert might discipline them, and transform them from an enervated, effeminate, leprous race into hardy and energetic soldiers, equal to the great task of conquest before them, he struck out in the general direction of the Gulf of Suez. Doubtless, as already remarked, a regular road ran past the head of the gulf to the Egyptian mining colony of Serabit el Khadem, north-west of Mt. Serbal, and it was a simple matter to follow it and double the northern extremity of the gulf. It is true, the Red Sea extended some miles farther north than it does now; yet near its head were cities, and a beaten road ran eastward into the Sinai Peninsula. Much difficulty is found by certain biblical students in accepting the story of the sea's opening and affording deliverance to the Israelites, and closing in upon the pursuing Egyptians; but there is an antecedent difficulty which rises even before we reach this. There are three places mentioned (Ex. xiv.) as in proximity with the sea,—Migdol, Pihahiroth, and Baalzephon. The location of the second of these is not determined; probably it is undeterminable. Migdol, the town or tower which the Greeks subsequently called Magdalon, was at some distance north of the gulf. Baal-zephon appears to have been the ridge even then consecrated to

the worship of Baal, which is now to be recognized in the bold Jebel Attakah, running south-eastwardly down to the shore, and forming in its eastern extremity a striking bluff. Between this ridge and the sea was a triangular piece of land, on some part of which was Pi-hahiroth. For some reason, entirely unexplainable on any theory but that which recognizes a miraculous intervention in parting the waters of the sea, Moses did not lead the host of the Israelites along the well-beaten road which doubled the head of the gulf, but drew them into that triangle which was bordered on the right by Baal-zephon, or Jebel Attakah, on the left by the sea, and in the rear by the great Egyptian army. It was, therefore, appropriate for Pharaoh to say, "They are entangled in the land; the wilderness hath shut them in."

The place where the crossing was effected was limited to the few miles between the point where the bold bluff of Jebel Attakah runs down to the sea, and the ancient head of the gulf, a few miles north of the present city of Suez. Everywhere there the water is shallow, and landings are at the present day only effected by means of boats, and with much difficulty. It is a safe conjecture, that the passage was made very near the site of Suez. Doubtless, wind and tide were agents in the piling-up of the waters, and their subsequent return; the Scripture itself states, that the "Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night." Dr. Bonar, in his excellent book called "The Desert of Sinai," accuses the learned and pious Robinson of trying to weaken the force of the miracle by ascribing it to the wind and tide; but not so do I read the work of our countryman: on the contrary, he stands strongly on the ground that a miracle was wrought, but simply claims that in working this great wonder God brought the winds and the waves into subjection to his will, and made them the ministers in executing his mighty purpose.

CHAPTER IV.

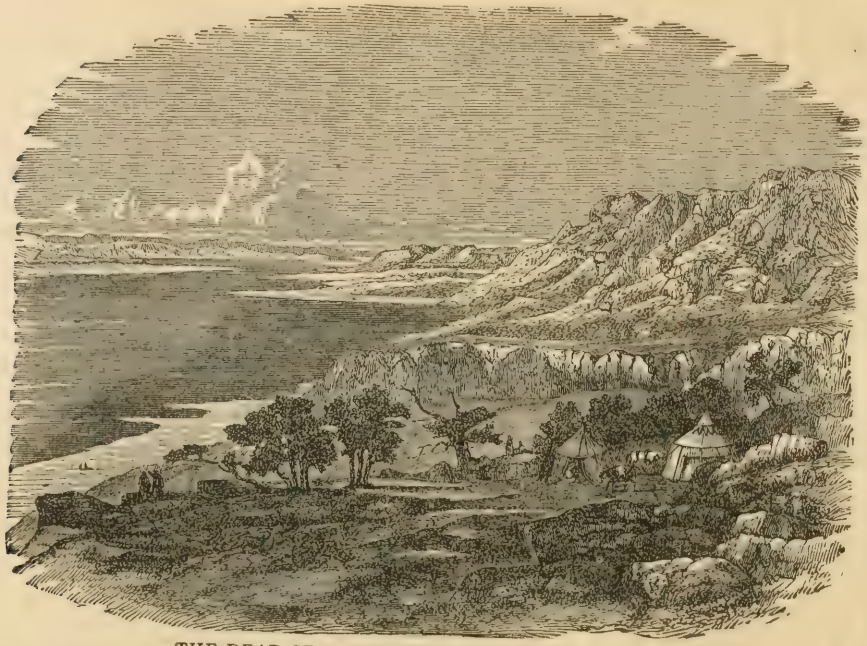
THE SINAI PENINSULA.

A Toilful Pilgrimage—Physical Aspect of the "Wilderness"—The Triangle of Land—Rugged Sublimity of Nature—A Great Mass of Molten Rock Suddenly Cooled—The Tih Plateau—Its Wall of Mountains—The Dead Sea Gorge—Captain Allen's Theory—The Results of Modern Science—A Land Without a History—Unchanged Aspect—Want of Vegetation—A Land of Pilgrims—Literature of the Desert—The Bitter Springs of Marah—The Sweet Springs of Elim—The "Goodly" Vale—A Tedious Climb—A Desolate Plain—Desert of Sin—The One Beautiful Valley of the Whole Region—Serbal, the Mountain of Mystery—The Written Characters on the Rock—Approach to Sinai.

WE have now taken the Hebrews back into Asia, their true home. Our next step will be to follow them in their long and toilful pilgrimage. It is true that they reached the borders of the promised land in about a year and a half after going out from Egypt, of which time a year was spent in the shadow of Mt. Sinai. The other thirty-eight years of their wanderings were passed in a limited region on the eastern and north-eastern border of the peninsula, and in a country of almost no resources, and scarcely superior to the deserts of Shur or Sinai.

Before attempting to follow the journey of the Israelites through the "wilderness," let me briefly sketch the physical character of the whole tract known as the Peninsula of Sinai. Between the two arms of the Red Sea known as the Gulfs of Akabah and Suez, there is a triangular piece of land, whose base-line is about one hundred and thirty miles in length, and runs from the city of Suez to the fortress of Akabah. The lower portion of this triangle is a mass of granitic mountains,

broken up into the most irregular and fantastic forms, and yet having a manifest center, the striking group of peaks of which Mt. Sinai is one. From this central knot of mountains there are various wadies, or waterless river-courses, running away to the sea, and forming natural means of communication between the various parts of this wild and formidable mass of rock. Perhaps nowhere else in the world is the face of nature more ruggedly sublime than here. The mountains met there are of no ordinary hight; the loftiest one, Om Shaumer, being nine thousand three hundred feet in altitude, and St. Catherine being eight thousand seven hundred. Standing on the summit of either one of these, the Gulf of Akabah is plainly seen on the east, and that of Suez on the west, neither of them but a few miles away. The country itself seems as if some gigantic convulsion once passed over it, heaving up huge waves of molten granite, and then cooling them at once. They have retained the ancient sharpness; and such is the dryness of the air, and the want of great and wearing rains, added to the natural hardness of the rock, that time has exerted no corrosive influence, and the aspect of the country can scarcely be changed from what it was when the Israelites passed through. North of this triangle, which occupies a good portion of the peninsula proper, there is an elevated plateau of limestone, the southern border of which is an almost precipitous wall of rock, four thousand feet in hight. This does not run due east and west; it forms a rude rim around the southern, south-western, and south-eastern sides of the plateau. The surface of this elevated plateau is undulating, and, in its north-east portion, rises into a second or superimposed plateau, which gradually settles away northward to meet the thin and scanty pasture lands of the "south country," the ancient patriarchal home. East of this great plateau runs northward and southward the desolate and arid trough of the Arabah, connecting the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah, and forming a continuation of that great cleft, or depressed chasm, which connects the Red Sea with Lake Tiberias. It was supposed, until a



THE DEAD SEA—VIEW FROM 'AIN JIDY (EN-GEDI)

The land around the Dead Sea was chosen by Lot as his inheritance; it was the most beautiful valley in the land; but was, with all its towns, afterwards destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven in consequence of the grievous sin of the inhabitants. David, being pursued by Saul, took refuge in a cave near this place. Here Saul also fell into his hands, but he spared his life, and only cut off the skirt of his robe.

very recent date, that the lower portion of the Ghor, or Jordan gorge, was so far depressed below the level of the ocean, that, if it were possible to run a canal across the plain of Esdraelon, and onward, between Gilboa and Tabor, till it should reach the Jordan, the entrance of the Mediterranean would at once form a noble ship-canal between Lake Tiberias and the Red Sea; and it is not many years since Capt. Allen, of the English Navy, wrote a book called "The Dead Sea a New Route to India," in which he discussed this theory *in extenso*. Later investigations have shown, however, that the land east of the plain of Esdraelon is so elevated that a canal would be impracticable at that point; and, moreover, that could the Jordan be flooded in this way, could that long defile between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea be converted into a deep lake, and the latter made many feet deeper than it is, the Arabah, the trough running from the Dead Sea southward to the Gulf of Akabah, instead of being all the way depressed to the extent that it has been supposed, rises at its highest portion to an altitude (eight hundred feet) altogether precluding the possibility of its being submerged. Measurements have been made repeatedly with a view to ascertain this fact; and at last it has been put beyond the possibility of error.

The physical character of the Sinai Peninsula is little changed, as remarked before, from what it was at the time of the Exodus. It is a land without a history; the only point where it links itself in with the changing destinies of the world is at the time when the Israelites sojourned within it. It always had a scanty, wandering population; and the few thousands of Arabs who inhabit the peninsula to-day are about as numerous, probably, and live in precisely the same manner, as the Amalekites of old, who had possession of the pasture land of the country. It is a region which always has been without houses; the little ecclesiastical city of Pharan, now in ruins, not being a real exception, so foreign was it to the whole character of the land. It has no soil capable of continuous and profitable cultivation; the long and fertile valley known

as the Wady Feiran, at the foot of Mt. Serbal, not having breadth and scope enough to repay for colonizing it alone. A great part of the country is so sterile as to fill the mind of travelers with dismay; there is no grass, no thrifty trees, except in Wady Feiran and at the Convent of Mt. Sinai, nothing but acacia-bushes, and furzy, thin, aromatic shrubs. After the rains of winter, it is true, a quick vegetation springs up; but the sun and the subsequent drought cause it to wither and utterly vanish. There are comparatively few springs in the country; those which emerge from the limestone tract are almost intolerably bad, while those issuing from the southern granitic tract are sweet and refreshing. The natural channels of communication across the country are in one sense numerous: in another they are not so; for, although the number of unimportant wadies is large, yet the really effective lines of intercourse are so few and so striking that there is no difficulty whatever in following them. Despite, therefore, the want of historical monuments, and the want of a nation there which perpetuates the history of the past, the physical character of the country is such that the simple narrative of the Bible allows us to follow, with tolerable closeness, and with a sense of certitude, the line of the Israelites' march. From the head of the Gulf of Suez there is a roughened plain, about ten miles in width, running southward for several miles, having the sea on the west, and the precipitous edge of the great Tih plateau on the east. Moses and the Israelites must have followed this plain; there is no alternative. South of this plain the system of great wadies is so simple that we have little if any difficulty in tracing them to Sinai. From Sinai, north-eastward, the task of following them is much more difficult, it is true; but there are certain landmarks there which make it tolerably easy to determine the course of the wanderers. I need not say that the word wilderness, used almost invariably in the Bible to signify the Sinai Peninsula, does not correspond at all with our use of the same term. To many of us it suggests the idea of dense woodland; it should imply the very reverse,

—a tract utterly destitute of vegetation, and wholly desert, sterile, respulsive. Nor should it convey the impression of a sandy waste. With the exception of the limited tract known as Ramleh, south of the Tih plateau, there is no sandy district in the whole peninsula. The country is stony and pebbly, but not sandy.

Arabia Petræa, as this country is sometimes called, is a land which has always been interesting to pilgrims. As early as the time of Elijah, to go to Horeb was a journey of devotion; and the old prophet is seen going down thither to commune with God in the place which had been consecrated centuries before his day. Very early in the history of the Christian church, the Sinaitic region became a sacred resort; and Arabian geographers and Christian travelers have explored it in all ages. The first volume of Ritter's "Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula" is devoted, in a large measure, to the tracing of the routes of those who have carefully explored the land; and no man in our time has had the patience to sift and compare their accounts with the care and fidelity and ability of the great German geographer. He has reviewed all the Roman itineraries, examined the Pentinger Tables, read all the Arabian and Greek geographers, and investigated the whole Christian literature of the subject. In my translation of his important work on the peninsula I have retained all that could illustrate the Bible; and yet no one can adequately measure the enormous erudition of Carl Ritter who does not look into the original and see what he has culled out to illustrate the geography of Arabia Petræa as it is connected with extra-biblical literature.

What Ritter has done for this department, our countryman, Dr. Robinson, only second to Ritter in his command of the literature of Sinai and Palestine, has done for original research on the spot. Ritter was never in the Holy Land; Robinson was the most acute and at the same time the most learned investigator who has ever gone thither. It is not too much to say that Robinson's Biblical Researches are worth all the

records of travel in the Holy Land from the time of the Saviour down to the time when he published his work. And this I say in full recognition of the value of Seetzen's, Irby and Mangles', Burckhardt's, Niebuhr's, Russegger's, and Ruppell's thorough, accurate, and hard-gained results, and in recognition, too, of a certain degree of merit to be ascribed to such writers as Felix Fabri, Cosmas Indicopleustes, Pietro della Valle, Buckingham, Pococke, and Monro. Yet all candid students of biblical geography know that when Robinson came upon the field, he observed so closely, with such ample preparation, and such acumen, that the publication of his work produced a revolution in the department. He has been worthily followed; but such works as Stanley's, Schubert's, Tristram's, Wilson's, Porter's, Laborde's even, and Thomson's, would hardly have been possible had Robinson not gone before. Indeed, he did his work so thoroughly that others have had but little to do except to glean in the field which he harvested. With the exception of a few narrow men who adhere closely to the monkish traditions respecting holy places, European scholars place just as high value on Robinson as we Americans can do: indeed, much more, for he is really only appreciated fully in Europe. I think I can not be wrong in saying, that, in the judgment of English and German scholars, Edward Robinson is the greatest name that has sprung up among us; and the preface of almost every new work on Biblical antiquities echoes the words of Ritter and Stanley respecting the amazing extent and accuracy of Robinson's investigations.

Having briefly sketched the physical character of the Sinaitic peninsula, and alluded to the literature of the subject, let me enter into some detail respecting the journey of the Israelites through the land. The first part of the way is unmistakable; it ran along that undulating plain which has already been referred to as lying between the lofty limestone wall on the east and the sea on the west. Northward and southward, as far as the eye can reach, the Israelites could see

confronting them that giant barricade, rising to the altitude of about four thousand feet. To ascend it would have been impossible for such a number of people, although the regular Mecca caravans now climb to the top by a natural pass, and strike directly eastward across the high plateau, descending again on the eastern margin, not far from the head of the Gulf of Akabah. The Israelites, however, did not attempt this, but followed the plain along the shore. It is a cheerless and most inhospitable country. There are some tolerable springs near the place where they crossed the sea, still known as the springs of Moses, shaded by palms, and a favorite resort to-day for the people of Suez, who, in the absence of better attractions, elevate that scanty oasis into the rank of their fashionable watering-place.

But from that point for many miles southward, for a three days' journey of the slowly-moving Israelite host, there are no supplies of water, and not a plant or a shrub which could in the slightest degree satisfy the hunger of man or beast. The Israelites, who had so recently left the luxurious valley of the Nile, were sorely tried even at the very start; indeed, there are few spots in the whole peninsula which would have more disheartened them than this barren plain along the sea. The site of the fountains of Marah, the bitter waters which they could not drink, is now easily traced; and indeed, the name still clings to the spot: and not only do travelers speak of the Ain Howarah, but of the Ain Amarah, almost side by side, whose waters are only used from sheer necessity. All the springs which flow from that limestone soil are bad, but none are intolerable excepting those which are first encountered after leaving Ain Musa, opposite Suez. And these are the ones which correspond with the Marah fountains of Scripture. Still farther on, about one day's journey southward, are the well-shaded and numerous springs of Wadies Ghurundel, Useit and Tayibeh, whose palm-trees are still the sight of all travelers. These were threescore and ten in number when the Israelites passed that way; they are variously counted by the



MARAH (AIN AMARA, THE BITTER WELLS.)

"And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter," Ex. xv., 23.

From an Original Photograph in the possession of the Author

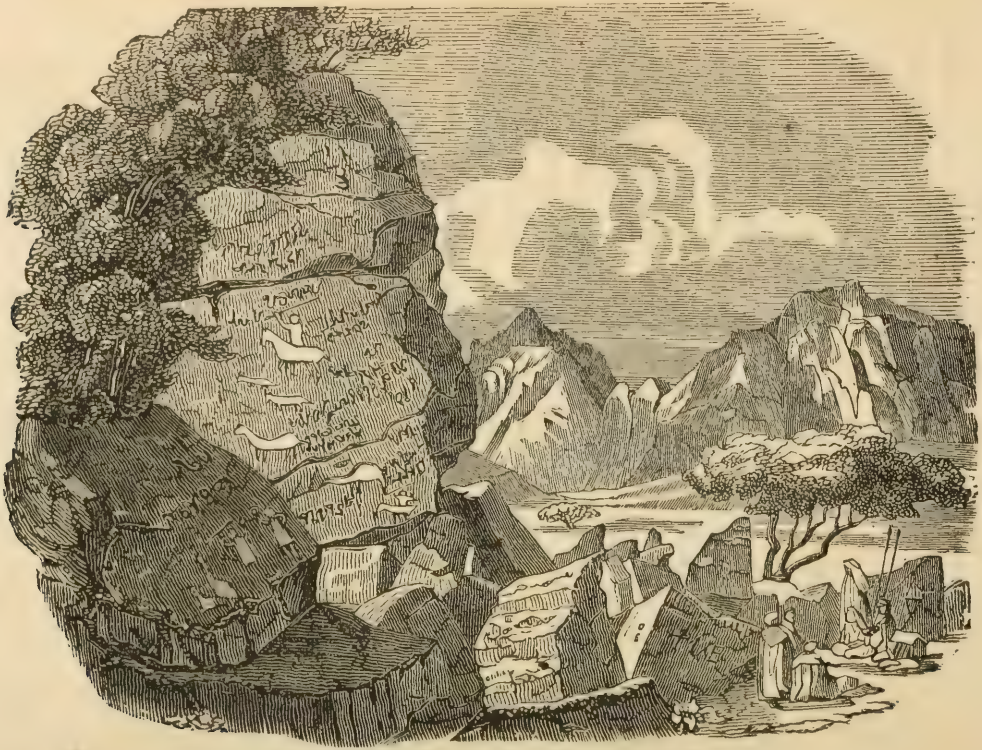
explorers of our own day, but are not widely different from the old number. The taste of the water is not markedly different from that found at the old springs of Marah; yet nearly all agree that the preference is to be given to that of Elim. The Scripture does not assert nor even imply that that of Elim was pleasant; it is an unwarranted inference—which has been drawn from the obviously attractive character of the place where they made their first long encampment—that the water of Elim was sweeter than that of Marah. That it is somewhat more agreeable is asserted by travelers; yet the difference is not marked: the same physical cause which controls the one controls the other also. In the midst of the attractions of Elim the Israelites tarried a month and a half. The place of their chief encampment was doubtless in the broad, open, fair wady known still as the "goodly," or Wady Tayibeh. It runs downward to the sea, and has a fine open view of the opposite coast-land of Egypt, and the intensely blue waters of the Gulf of Suez, a good way northward and southward. It has been the custom of some writers to assume that the single Wady of Ghurundel is the Elim of Scripture; but the requisitions of so vast a host as that of the Israelites during a sojourn of more than a month make it almost necessary to infer that they distributed themselves over all the fertile tracts in the immediate neighborhood.

From Elim there was a tedious and difficult passage to the Wilderness of Sin. They could either have passed by narrow and obstructed defiles, or round about, as some travelers do, by a narrow and dangerous path running between the rocks and the sea. Here is the natural boundary between the Desert of Shur and the Desert of Sin. The latter is a desolate plain, about twelve miles in length, and known to-day as El Murkah. Little water is found upon it, and what there is, is bitter. It is a place which one can see at a glance would sorely try the Israelites, and compel them to cry out, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat

bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." It is noticeable that it was in this desert, where the tamarisk-tree is not found, where, in fact, there is no vegetation, that the supply of manna first appeared.

From the plain of El Murkah, the Wilderness of Sin, there are three ways which might have been taken. One of these passes near the base of the great rock-wall of the Tih plateau, runs near the ancient Egyptian mining colony of Serabit el Khadem,—whose ruins are still distinctly visible, and which was probably a busy scene at the time of the Exodus,—soon after traverses the sandy waste of Debbet er Ramleh, and then, by a difficult and narrow line of wadies, or rock valleys, runs down to the open plain in front of the traditional Mt. Sinai. This led the Israelites toward the left. Another way ran along the borders of the sea to the plain El Kaa, which lies between the whole granitic mountain-mass at the south of the peninsula, and the sea; and from this plain, by way of the important Wady Hebran, up to Mt. Sinai. This would cause them to bear to the right, and then to take a sharp turn to the left. There still is a middle course. They may have crossed the Desert of Sin, entered the romantic valley known as Shellal, and passed by it into the long and curious ravine known as Wady Mukatteb, or Valley of the Inscriptions; thence into the fair, fertile, and well-watered Wady Feiran, and directly to the base of Mt. Sinai. There is little or no doubt that the latter was the one chosen; it has every advantage in its favor,—it is the most direct, the best supplied with shade and water, and the one which is most in harmony with the Scripture narrative. The first of the three ways is rocky, scantily supplied with springs, and longer than the last; the second is much longer and much harder; the last is the one which is now assumed by all later observers as the route of the Israelites.

Two places are then mentioned as the scenes of temporary encampment,—Dophkah and Alush: no traces of them re-



ENGRAVED ROCKS IN THE OUADI MOKATTAB.

This view is from rocks near Sinai, but it illustrates the tablets of the Dog River.

main, but they were unquestionably on or near the plain El Murkah. But passing that, we come to more explicit allusions, and to scenes of even greater interest. In the well-watered and palm-shaded Wady Feiran, directly at the base of the imposing five-peaked Serbal,—a sacred mountain for long ages even when the Israelites passed by its foot,—there was the encampment of a part of the numerous and widely-scattered Amalekites. They were just such a race, doubtless, as the strongest and fiercest of the Arab tribes of the present day. They knew of the approach of the Israelites, and predicted with certainty, that, if a stand were not made, the delightful paradise which they inhabited would be wrested from them, and its clear brook and lofty palms become the possession of this host of strangers. This was the reason of the stand which they made; this the cause of that noted battle. The Israelites advanced along that wonderful Valley of Inscriptions, Wady Mukatteb, whose walls are written over with those mysterious and undeciphered hieroglyphics, provoking the curiosity of travelers more than any other object in the whole peninsula, and traced more or less numerously on every important mountain and rock-wall in the land, with the single exception of Mt. Sinai. From Wady Mukatteb they passed into Wady Feiran; the place where they are connected being, it would seem, the site of Rephidim. At the very foot of Serbal, and rising distinctly in view of those who stand in the valley known as Feiran, is a low but well-marked hill, on which Moses, Aaron, and Hur appear to have stood during the battle. The victory of the Israelites put them in possession of the most paradisaical spot in the whole peninsula. For more than a month and a half they remained in that fertile vale. The Egyptian colony at Serabit el Khadem was not far from them; but not a hint is given in the Bible to indicate whether the two races came at all into contact. Yet visitors came from Midian, east of the Gulf of Akabah, with an errand of great import to the Israelites. It is a curious fact that the polity which Jethro imparted to Moses, his son-

in-law, is singularly like that which prevails among the Bedouins of the present time. The taking away of that single responsibility which was slowly crushing the strength of the great lawgiver by overtaxing his power, was followed by that delegation of trust to rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, which is a marked feature of Arab polity; and every line in the description of the interview of Moses and Jethro is faithful to the experience of all close observers of the Bedouin character. It has been supposed by many, and by some too whose opinions are entitled to the most respectful consideration, that Mt. Serbal, the most striking by far in the whole peninsula, is the Sinai of the Bible. There is little or no doubt that that was a holy mountain at the time of the Exodus, and that it was the place whither not only Phœnicians and Philistines resorted, but Egyptians as well, for the purpose of sacrifice. It has been a hallowed spot in modern time; the remains of altars may be seen on the summit, and the ecclesiastical city of Pharan, the walls of which are yet standing, was at its base. It is the place to which, in all probability, as has already been remarked, Moses wished to go to sacrifice, a three days' journey in the wilderness. Some have thought that Horeb is Serbal, and Sinai the well-known sacred mountain ten miles farther west; others, with more reason, as it seems to me, make Horeb a generic word comprising that whole region embracing both Sinai and Serbal. Still, after giving due weight to the arguments of Lepsius, that Serbal, the sacred mountain of that region in the most ancient time, was the scene of the lawgiving, I must admit that the hints given in the Bible do not apply so well to it as to the traditional mountain of Sinai. I know that Serbal is the most imposing mountain; but it is by no means the loftiest, it being but six thousand three hundred feet high, while the traditional Sinai is more than eight thousand. Besides, the delightful Wady Feiran at its base can not be confounded with the Wilderness of Sinai. The Bible says (Ex. xix. 1), after its account of the battle with the Amalekites and the interview

with Jethro, manifestly in Wady Feiran, "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount."

CHAPTER V.

MOUNT SINAI, AND THE YEARS OF WANDERING.

The Broad, Curved Valley called Wady Sheikh—Pass of the Winds—The Plain before Sinai a Lofty, Craggy Pile—A Wall of Rock—Form and Structure of the Mountain—Discovery of the Sinaitic Manuscript of the New Testament by Prof. Tischendorf—The Convent of the Forty—Convent of St. Catharine—Scene of the Israelites' Encampment—Moses' Ascent—The Wilderness of Sinai—What Grows there—Silence of the Desert—Effect of a Thunderstorm—Elijah's Chapel—View from Sinai—The Stay of the Israelites around the Mount—Their Journey Northward—The Spies—Kadesh Barnea—Scene of the First Contest—Region of the Edomites—Aaron's Burial-place—Route of the Spies—Preliminary Survey of Palestine—Petra—Approach to the "Promised Land."

 ROM the foot of Serbal, and the luxuriant verdure of Wady Feiran, there runs a broad, curving valley, the largest and most important in the whole peninsula, bearing the name of Wady Sheikh. It is a continually-ascending way, and leads to a plain from which rises the group of mountains, Ed Deir, St. Catherine, Sinai, and Om Shaumer. From Serbal to Sinai there is a more direct but frightfully precipitous and rocky path, the Nubh Hawy, or Pass of the Winds, whose difficulties travelers agree in regarding as the most formidable in the peninsula. The broader and longer one of these was doubtless taken by the main body of the Israelites; and there is found in it, even now, no scanty amount of pasturage for flocks. Emerging from the broad mouth of Wady Sheikh, the traveler stands on the Desert of Sinai. A plain is seen, vast in size when one thinks how rare it is to meet any continuous tract in that broken and rocky country, for it embraces no less than a square mile. At one extremity there towers the lofty, craggy pile known as Ras

Sasafeh, the northern abutment of Sinai. Its grandeur and precipitousness, taken in connection with the great plain at its base, caused Robinson to suspect in a moment that here was the scene of the law-giving. The highest peak of Sinai can not be seen from this plain; one must pass round the mountain to the south side to see it; but the northern side is so bold and steep that it makes an even more striking impression on the mind than the more shelving southern ascent. The face of Ras Sasafeh rises so that one can well see that the command was an intelligible one, that the mount be not touched; towering, as it does, like a wall of rock. On that plain, hundreds of thousands of people could stand, and look up to the majestic, overhanging cliff. At the southern base of Sinai is another tolerably large tract of ground, known as the Plain of Sebaiyeh; but it is far more broken and uneven than the great camping-ground on the north. Since the time of Robinson, most travelers have coincided with this view, that the latter was the place where the people assembled when the law was given, though there are some who insist that they were on the more uneven ground south of the mountain, since there is the view of the true crest of Sinai. The mountain is long, rather than round, and its physical character is this: On the east there is a defile running northward and southward, separating Sinai from the lofty mountain known as Ed Deir. On the western side there is another similar ravine, separating Sinai from the still loftier peak of St. Catherine. In the former of these defiles, a mile from the great plain at the north base of the mountain, is the Greek convent, built in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian, and the only hostelry for travelers in the whole peninsula. It has been so often described that I need only allude to it, for it bears no special relation to my subject. It has, within a very few years, been brought into new prominence as the scene of Prof. Tischendorf's discovery of a very ancient manuscript of the New Testament; and I shall not soon forget the rare pleasure I enjoyed, a few months since, in hearing from his

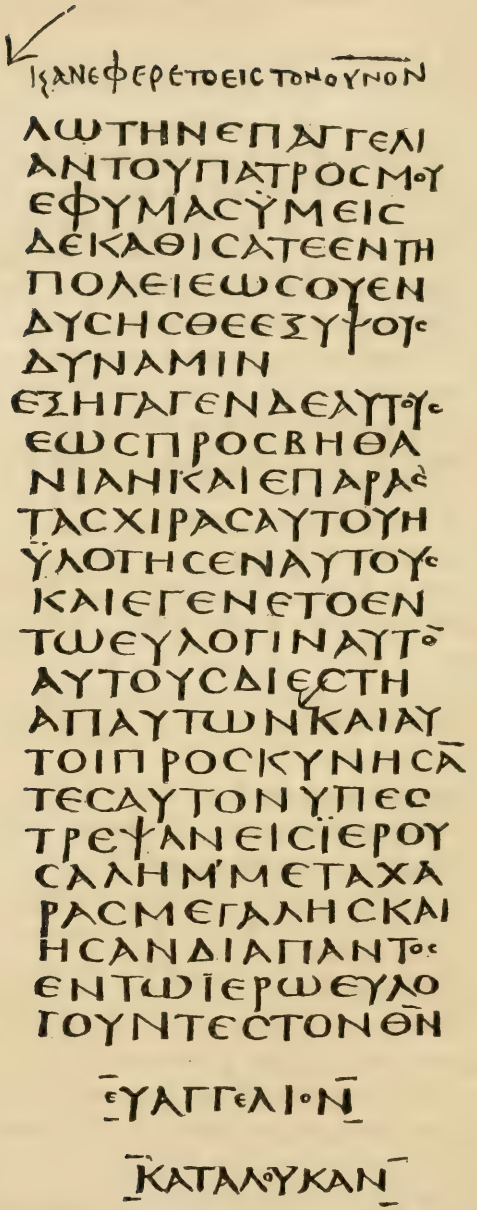


CONVENT OF ST. CATHARINE, MOUNT SINAI

own lips the story of that most interesting discovery,—the unfolding of hint after hint, the intense anxiety, and the hours of joy when the precious document came to light.* In the other ravine, that along the western base of the mountain, is a deserted convent, that of El Arbain, or the Forty. The ascent is made from the convent, the way leading up continuous flights of rude stairs, cut along in the solid granite. The top of the mountain is long and tolerably flat, being mostly a small rock-plateau, running northward to a sharp edge, down which you can look, as from the eaves of a house, directly upon the great plain. The southern portion of the mountain rises cone-like into the air, and looks down upon the narrower and more broken Plain of Sebaiyeh at the southern base of Sinai. On this high peak Moses would seem to have dwelt during those long forty days and forty nights in which he was communing with his God; while Joshua appears not to have gone above the rock-plateau, and there to have awaited the return of Moses from the loftier hight. The place has for centuries been a sacred one, and the broken remnants of churches and chapels, and a mosque, even, testify to the ancient regard of Mohammedans as well as Christians for this sacred spot.

I am inclined to think that the true view of the place of the encampment must be gained by partial concession both of those who hold to the northern and those who hold to the southern plain. They are connected, not only by the narrow ravine east of Sinai, which beyond the convent narrows into a mere foot-path, but by a very broad line of valley which passes east of the mountain east of Sinai. In this valley, as well as in the two plains, there was an excellent opportunity for encampment; and I can not forbear thinking that the great host of the Israelites filled both the plains and this circuitous Wady Sebaiyeh, as well as that portion of Wady Sheikh which connects the great plain Er Rahah with Wady Sebaiyeh. The play of lightnings was doubtless visible all over the mountain; the elders and the chief priests were

* On the three following pages, specimens in exact fac-simile are given of this ancient manuscript.

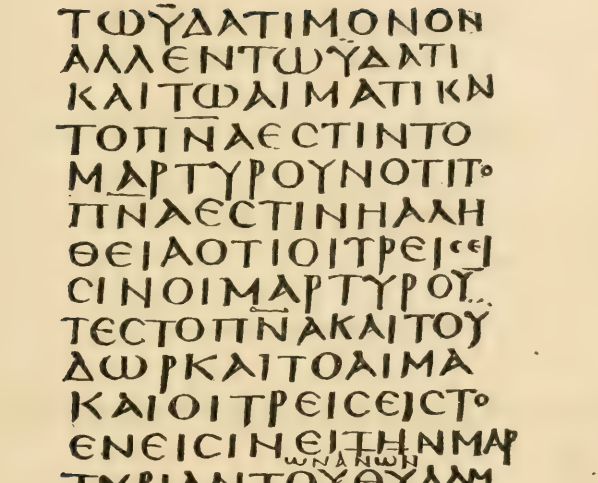

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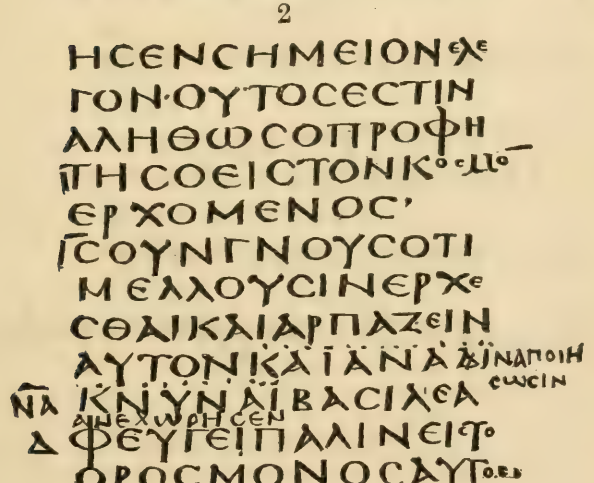
ΚΑΤΑΛΥΚΑΝ

Note.—The above is Luke xxiv. 49–53, in exact fac-simile from the Sinai manuscript.

1



2



Note.—No. 1, is John v. 6–9. No. 2, is John vi. 14, 15.

3

ΘΟΥCΚΑΙΒΡΕΧΙΕΠΙ

4

ΥΠΟΕΓΡΩΝΤΗΝΤΥΧΗΝΑΥΤΟΥΑΠΟΛΕCΙΑΥΤΗΝ

5

ΑΛΛΑΑΥΤΟΙΕΝΕΑΥ
ΤΟΙCΜΕΤΡΟΥΝΤΕC

6

ΚΑΙΑΜΑΡΤΩΛΟΙ

7

ΙΩΑΝΝΗC ΙΟΥΔΑΕΔΙΕ

8

ΚΑΝΕΦΕΡΕΤΟΕΙC ΤΟΝΟΥΝΟΝ

9

ΑΙΜΑΤΟCΖΑΧΑΡΙΟΥΥΟΥΒΑΡΑΧΙΟΥ

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ΑΓΓΕΛΟC

12

ΚΑΤΩ ΕΜΒΛΕΨΟΝ ΤΑΙΙΣ

13

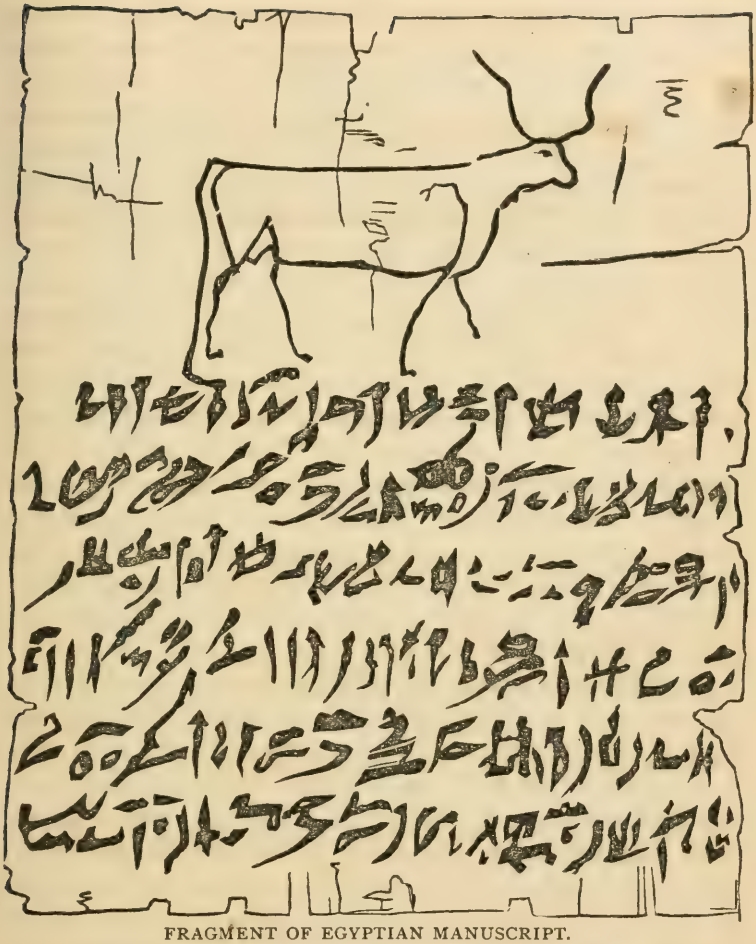
ΤΟΤΗCΕΥCΕΒΕΙΑC
ΜΥCΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΟCΕ

14

ΓΟΝΤΕCΕΙΕΣΕCΤΙ

15

Note No. 3, is a correction in Matt. v. 45. No. 4, is a correction in Matt. x. 39. No. 5, is a correction in 2 Cor. x. 12. No. 6, is a correction in Matt. ix. 10. No. 7, is a correction in Matt. iii. 13, 14. No. 8, is a correction in Luke xxiv. 51. No. 9, is a correction in Matt. xxiii. 35. No. 10, is a caligraphic flourish. No. 11, is a correction in Rev. xi. 1. No. 12, is a correction in Isaiah viii. 28. No. 13, is a correction in 1 Tim. iii. 16. No. 14, is a correction in Matt. xix. 3. No. 15, is a sentence by a certain monk who had been employed on the manuscript, or had the use of it, nearly as late as the 12th century.

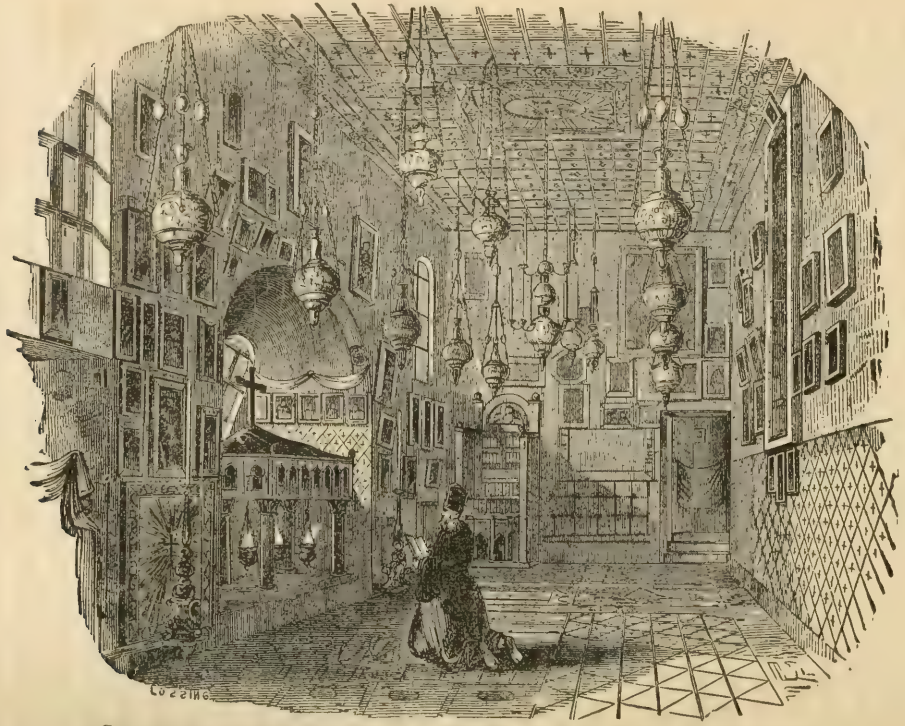


FRAGMENT OF EGYPTIAN MANUSCRIPT.
Similar in character to those found on the written rocks in the Sinaitic desert.

probably in the plain south of the mountain, and an immense multitude doubtless stood on the northern plain, and looked up to the top of the massive wall which is called Ras Sasafeh.

Most travelers have inferred, from the fact that the ascent is on the eastern side, that there was the path by which Moses went up; but my friend, Rev. F. W. Holland of London, who has recently passed several weeks in that neighborhood, assures me the most accessible way is one leading from the northern extremity of the western defile, and that there is little doubt that Moses went up and down that way. If that is the case, the old tradition which makes the casting of the golden calf at that point would seem to rest upon a certain basis of truth; although, as a general rule, these traditions—such for instance as that the convent occupies the place where Moses discovered the burning bush, and that the rock can still be seen at the foot of Sinai which was smitten by Moses, and from which water gushed—are idle fables, invented by the Greek monks for the easy credulity of the Arabs. Still, there are one or two interesting circumstances connected even with these traditions: one is, that the mountain itself bears the name, not of Sinai, but of Jebel Musa, the Mount of Moses, while the ravine east of it is called, even to-day, by the Arab name of Moses' father-in-law.

Around this mountain lay the tract known as the Wilderness of Sinai. It is one thousand feet higher than the level of Wady Feiran; the air is dry, clear, and bracing. I need not say that this is one of the healthiest districts in the world; the winds which sweep across these rocks are laden with no impurities, and bring only vigor. There are a few springs of water, and these are sweet and refreshing, for they issue from granite, not from limestone. There are small bits of land moist enough to reward tillage; and all travelers are enthusiastic about the trees and grass and herbs grown in the garden of the Greek convent. In the western ravine there are the traces of old gardens not quite given up to utter neglect; the monks go thither every year and take a little care of them, gathering figs



CHAPEL OF MOSES UPON THE SUPPOSED SITE OF THE BURNING BUSH.

and dates and almonds, and a few other tropical productions, to lay in store, or to send to Cairo. On the mountains there grow a few aromatic shrubs, and in the wadies there are scanty furze-bushes, giving a meagre support to the camels and the goats of the Arabs, and once sustaining the herds of the Israelites. The Wilderness of Sinai comprised a large part of Wady Sheikh, the plain Er Rahah, the plain of Sebaiyeh, and Wady Sebaiyeh. It was the Israelites' home for a year; and here not alone was the Decalogue given, but the whole ceremonial law was perfected, and propounded to the people. As the Bible expressly says that the Decalogue was given during a thunder-storm, while the people were filled with fear, it may be remarked incidentally, that one, at least, of the travelers who have given us the record of their wanderings has described a thunder-storm at Sinai. The play of lightning and the echoes of the thunder he asserts to have been extraordinarily grand and impressive. The ordinary silence of the desert is so appalling that when it is broken in this way the roll of thunder is doubly loud, and the mountains themselves seem to quake. A person sitting on the summit of Ras Sasafeh, and speaking in ordinary tones, can be understood at the base, for there is not the sound of a bird or an insect or a brook to mingle with his voice. The desert is inhabited by absolute, unbroken silence. It is unnecessary to say that Moses, learned as he was in the arts of the Egyptians, was master of no magic which would enable him to create a mimic thunder-storm on Sinai; and it is a paltry way of dealing with the text to degrade that great convulsion of the elements in which the law was given, into the legerdemain of a showman. Whatever more there was, there was a storm of thunder and lightning, not inferred from hints in the Bible, but directly and explicitly asserted.

Among the chapels on Sinai there is one bearing the name of Elijah; and near it is a small aperture in the rock, which is asserted to have served the prophet as a lodging-place. In the absence of a spot more fit, this is thought, even by the

careful Ritter, to be authentic. The pilgrimage of Elijah to Horeb is the only instance recorded in the Bible of any one of the Israelites going down from Palestine to view the scene where the law was given. How different from the pilgrim spirit of the present and the past few centuries! It was an easy thing for the Jews to go to Horeb, but its ancient fame appears to have inspired no desire to see it. It throws new light, not more on the spirituality of Elijah than upon the worldliness of the nation in whose mind he tried to keep divine truth a living thing. And here was the place, so far as the evidence in our possession enables us to go, where Elijah was, after receiving the command to "go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still, small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave; and, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?"

"The view from the summit can not compare," says Ritter, "even under the clearest sky, with that from St. Catherine, and hence travelers who have interested themselves in making a topographical survey of the whole peninsula have made little account of it. But the very fact that Sinai is so overtopped by loftier peaks gives the view from its summit its own peculiar charms. Shut in, as the observer is, he can better study the strange wildness and sublimity of this little cluster of naked mountains, and get a better conception of the strange elemental forces which produce so haggard a scene, than if upon a loftier summit and with a wider view. Sir Francis Henniker has very truly and finely said that it seemed to him, as he surveyed the wild picture before him, as if it had once

been an ocean of boiling lava, cooled and fixed in its present form by a single mandate of the Most High.

"Yet, though the view from Sinai toward the east, south, and west is comparatively limited, in consequence of the greater hight of the outlying peaks, the view is by no means inconsiderable, nor to be dismissed with a hasty passing word. Both the arms of the Red Sea can be seen, although only in glimpses. 'Close before me,' says Wellsted, 'rose St. Catherine, with its bare, wedge-shaped peak, wearing a snow-cap cone yet upon its head. For many years, in the course of repeated voyages made in all the waters adjacent to this region, I had been accustomed to look at all these mountain systems from every point of view; but the loftiness of the Sinai group gave it at once a special character. Rising in sharp, isolated wedges, enormous masses of rock have detached themselves from time to time, and have fallen, giving rise to deep clefts, gorges, and ravines, which break through the whole district, and give it the wildest aspect. The highest summits are covered with snow in winter, which, melting in spring, fills the channels of countless brooks, and sweeps with mad and devastating violence through all the mountain-passes, carrying away whatever little soil may have accumulated. The lofty wedge-shape brings the peaks of the Sinai group in sharp contrast with those of the other long, low ridges of the peninsula. No resting-places for man, no villages, no castles, give animation to the scene, as in European mountain regions; no lake, no clear river, no waterfall, no forest breaks the monotony of solitude. Everywhere there is seen only the wide, empty wilderness,—gray, dark-brown, black,—in the extreme distance the bright sea of sand. There is nothing to give interest to the scene except the mighty recollection of the past: this throws over it all a dark and deep and mysterious charm.'"

In the valleys and on the plains which encompass Sinai the Israelites passed nearly a year. At the end of that time, the law being perfected, the people, being hardened by their tent life and open-air duties, were supposed to be ready to move

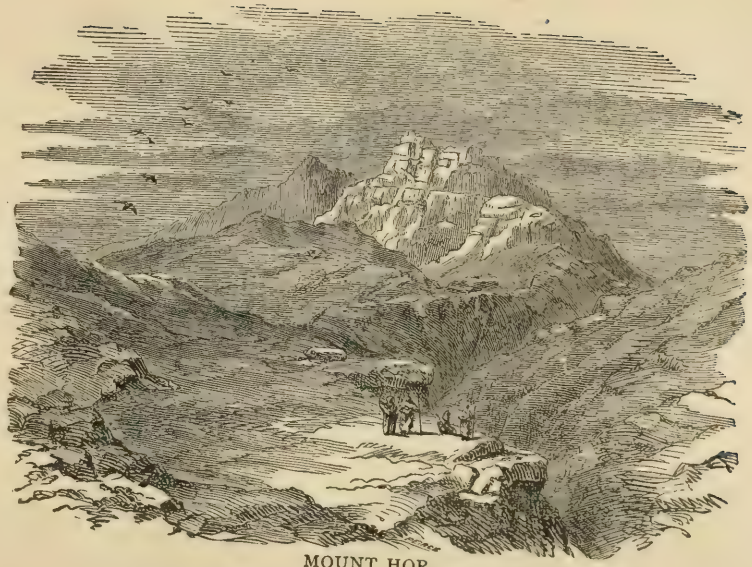
on to the promised land without delay. Up to this point we have followed them without great difficulty: after this point their course is much more uncertain, partly in consequence of the obscurity of the language of Scripture, and partly from the want of a thorough examination of the whole country. It is true, every route has been traversed, but no traveler has explored all, compared them with themselves and with the biblical account, and given us the result of his investigations. Still, there is little need of this. The general character of the country is much the same, whichever way the Israelites chose in their journey northward. It was a great and terrible wilderness, relieved with few springs and scanty vegetation, and filled with narrow passes and desolate plains. It is almost a profitless use of time to endeavor to decipher the geography of the thirty-third chapter of Numbers. Those encampments were of so little account in leaving any impress on the Hebrew character, they were in every sense so temporary, that the scholarship which is worthily directed to the tenth chapter of Genesis is here squandered on an unremunerative theme. Yet the record of the earlier chapters of Numbers gives us all that we really need, and tells its story with even greater explicitness than does the narrative of Exodus relative to the approach to Sinai. There is little doubt that the Israelites took what seemed the most direct course to the land which they sought, passing, as it would seem, up to the great elevated plateau known as the Tih; and when drawing near to the confines of Palestine, delegating forty of their number to go up and explore the land. The main body, meanwhile, passed down into the long trough of the Arabah, between the limestone wall of the Tih on the west and the mountains of Seir, or Edom, on the east, to Kadesh, a district lying, it would seem, in the north-western part of this sunken valley. No trace of the city of Kadesh appears to be remaining; but Kadesh seems to have been a district as well as a city; and of all the locations which have been assigned to it, that given by Robinson appears to be the one best authenti-

cated. The Desert of Paran, often alluded to in the Bible, is, taken in a general sense, the broad tract known as the Tih Plateau; while that of Zin seems to be the sterile valley of the Arabah. The five deserts of the whole peninsula are these: Shur, or Etham, near the Isthmus of Suez; Sin, the western plain, embracing not only the tract alluded to as El Murkah, crossed by the Israelites after leaving Elim and the encampment by the sea, but extending down nearly to the southern extremity of the peninsula, and comprising the plain known at the present time as El Kaa; Sinai, the plains around the mountain of the law-giving; Paran, the Tih Plateau; and Zin, the valley of the Arabah. Kadesh lay on the confines and between both the latter; hence it is sometimes reckoned as belonging to the one, and sometimes to the other. The reader of the Bible history need not be reminded of the hasty and desperate plunge which the Israelites made to seize a mountain of the Amalekites, as it is called in the narrative, nor of the signal defeat which they encountered. The region is so little known at present, that I dare not attempt to pronounce upon the hypothesis that that mountain was a second small plateau, superimposed upon the north-eastern portion of the great Tih plain. Enough that it appears tenable. At just what time the conflict with the king of Arad, one of the walled cities in the south of Palestine, took place, it is difficult to say; but this is plain: the country which they sought to take was too strong for them. Caleb and Joshua were the only ones of the spies who gave a favorable account of the comparative ease of capturing the land; and in both assaults the Israelites were evidently completely routed. We see them in both instances, pushed back down the Arabah Valley.

Very near them rose the lofty range of Edom,—the mountains of Seir. A valley known as Wady Ghaweir runs eastward from the Arabah, cleaving the range, and allowing free passage across the country once held by the Edomites. This was in the possession of the descendants of Esau; but if permission were granted to the Israelites to pass through, they

might easily march northward, east of the Dead Sea, and enter Palestine by another approach. The south was, as they saw, thoroughly guarded. The "Canaanites and Amalekites dwelt in the valley," meaning the northern part of the Arabah and along the shores of the Dead Sea; while the Amorites held the high land of the south of Palestine. They had proved themselves more than a match for the Israelites, and now a new way must be sought; but the Edomites were unwilling that their kinsmen should pass through their territory. Then follows that long period of distressing waiting,—those years while the old generation was dying and being buried, those thirty-eight years of aimless wandering, and of more purposeless encampments. To all appearance, they did not travel much out of the Arabah Valley, one of the most barren, arid, and frightful portions of the whole desert. Of the many places mentioned in connection with their wanderings, Mt. Hor and Ezion-geber stand out with perfect distinctness. Whenever these names are mentioned we know where we are. Mt. Hor, the place of Aaron's burial, his place of sepulture being marked at the present day by a Mahometan *wely*, or tomb, overhangs the eastern edge of the Arabah, not far from its northern extremity, while Ezion-geber lay at the northern end of the Gulf of Akabah. We see the Israelites at this place; we see them farther north again, at the foot of Hor, and yet again at Kadesh; in despair, doubtless, disgusted with their provisions, famished for want of water, and dying by thousands.

Reference has already been made to the journey of the spies northward. Their course is perfectly plain. They passed out of the Desert of Zin by the narrow pass of Sufa, or Zephath, not far from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, thence to Hebron, and so up the whole line of water-shed along which Abraham and Jacob and Jacob's sons had passed, till they reached Rehob, not far from Dan, a short distance west of Lake Huleh. Just north of Rehob is the opening of the long valley between the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon



MOUNT HOR.

The solitary peak where Aaron died and on which he was buried.

Mountains, and in that valley lay the ancient city of Hamath. We read, therefore, in the account of the spies' course, that "they searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath." Some have imagined that another Rehob is meant, lying farther north, and nearer the city of Hamath, which was in the narrowest part of the Cœle-Syrian Valley, and where, near Antioch, the Orontes breaks through a wild mountain gorge; but this seems to me a false view. The spies were absent forty days, and, with the going and returning, the time would be entirely consumed in traversing the district between Dan and Beersheba, or, which is almost identical, between Rehob, close by Dan, and the Desert of Zin.. Eshcol, whose grapes have received undying celebrity from their visit, is a valley under the very shadow of the city of Hebron; and the grapes of that spot, though perhaps not equaling those which the virgin soil once produced there, are still remarkable both for size and flavor. We get, in the report of the spies, one glimpse of the inhabitants of Hebron, giants in stature compared with the diminutive Hebrews. The Israelites were at Kadesh when the spies returned. The report was brief, and, notwithstanding the good things which it confirmed to exist in Palestine, was not a little discouraging. They reported to Moses (Num. xiv. 27–30), "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this [the grapes] is the fruit of it. Nevertheless, the people be strong that dwell in that land, and the cities are walled, and very great; and, moreover, we saw the children of Anak [the giants] there. The Amalekites dwell in that land of the south; and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and by the coast of Jordan." Of some of these tribes we have already caught glimpses. A portion of the Amalekites we saw in Wady Feiran, stopping the way of the Israelites as they advanced to Sinai,—a widely-scattered tribe, wandering over the Tih Plateau, the south country, and the Arabah Valley; the Jebusites

have been referred to as the inhabitants of the rock which became the subsequent Jerusalem; the Hittites we saw dwelling in the neighborhood of Hebron, and selling to Abraham the grave of Machpelah; while the Amorites have been referred to as inhabiting the hill country in the southern part of Palestine. It is manifest, at a glance, that they all possessed a higher civilization than the wandering Hebrews. Their walled cities, and their culture of the grape, indicate that they were far in advance of the race which had not risen from the estate of slaves to the strength and culture which were only to accrue with the lapse of centuries.

From the results of this preliminary survey of Palestine, let us come back to the wanderings of the Israelites. It should not be supposed that they were on the move from day to day; their course was in all probability not unlike that of the Arabs of the present time. They must advance in obedience to the necessities of pasturage for their flocks, and of water for themselves. He who hears even the young ravens which cry, would move the pillar of cloud and of fire, so as in ordinary cases to minister to these natural wants. Could they have gone to that romantic rock city of Petra, as Stanley fancies they did, though I think without reason, they would have found shade and water and pasturage, and their thirty-eight years in and near Kadesh would not have been intolerable. It seems to be one of the few weak points in Stanley's admirable work,—this fanciful identification of Kadesh, the place where Miriam died, and where the scarcity of water is expressly alluded to, with the profusely-watered city of Petra. And here I can not refrain from paying a passing tribute to the rare thoroughness as well as to the peculiar beauty of Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine." That tenacious notion that a picturesque, fascinating, brilliant work must necessarily be superficial and unreliable, has caused some to entertain the conviction that because Stanley has the former qualities in an eminent degree, he must be destitute of the sterling qualities which characterize the heavier Robinson. It is not so. His work is in every re-

spect a classic. Chateaubriand and Lamartine wrote books on Palestine, whose peculiar, indeed whose only value lay in their style; but Stanley, while always ornate, rich, picturesque, and yet chaste, betrays the ripest scholarship and a thoroughly-trained judgment. Nor is it to be said that there are no grounds for identifying Kadesh with Petra; there are some which are entitled to consideration, although the burden of evidence is against them.

Not being allowed to pass through the rocky hights of Edom, we see the Israelites, at the end of forty years, move down to the Gulf of Akabah once more, round the lower extremity of the mountains of Seir, and pass up along their eastern base. The Edomites, descendants of Esau, seem to have cherished no ill-will toward their distant kinsmen, notwithstanding their former refusal, and bring out provisions to them as they pass by. It is a quick march. The narrative makes no halt till it takes them to the borders of Moab. Only two incidents are brought into distinct notice: the one occurring apparently at the outset, the latter while the Israelites were well on their way. The first of these was the death of Aaron, on Mt. Hor; the second was the fatal biting of the serpents. The discovery, by Burckhardt, of venomous reptiles near the northern portion of the Gulf of Akabah, seems not only to corroborate the striking veracity of the narrative, but to fix the place where this evil befell the wandering Israelites.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRANS-JORDANIC DISTRICT.

A New Field—Recapitulation—The Ancient Tribes—The Moabites and the Ammonites—Moab and its Divisions—A Country Little Explored—Who have gone through it—Hindrances made by the Savage Bedouins—Victory over "Sihon, King of Amorites"—Rampage Northward into Og's Region—Porter's Researches—The Houses of Bashan—Argob and its Threescore Cities—Territory Given to Reuben—To Gad—To Half-Manasseh—Hermon and its Various Names—The Midianites—Balaam and the Scene of His Vision—The Theoretical Limits of Palestine—Prominent Objects in the Landscape—Scene of Moses' Death—His Allotment of the "Promised Land."



E have now advanced to a new field, a kind of intermediate link between the Wilderness and the Land of Promise. That district, east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan, has already come into view once or twice. We have seen the descent of Chedorlaomer and the kings of the East upon it, their onslaught upon the ancient tribe of Emim, east of the Dead Sea, and the Zamzummim, or Zuzim, farther north, east of the lower Jordan; we have seen Jacob crossing the mountains of Gilead, erecting his memorial pile at Mahanaim, on the Jabbok, and passing thence down the defile to the Jordan; but further than this it has not come into any prominence. Nor does it do so in the subsequent Bible story; for although the territories of Ammon and Moab, of Reuben, Gad, and Half-Manasseh, have some relation to the history of Israel, yet it is only slight and incidental. At the time when the Hebrews entered that district, the land was in a state of convulsion, and the circumstances of the king of Moab were desperate. Here, as in all our previous studies, history is the best companion of geography; indeed, the two

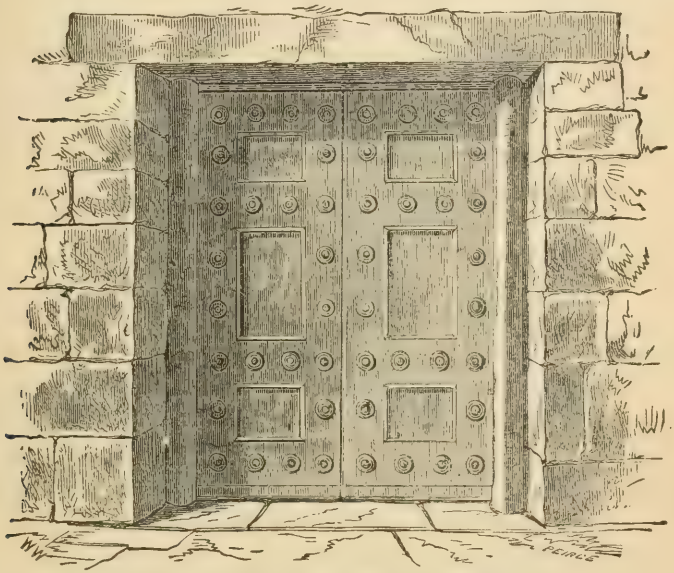
are inseparable if we would view the Holy Land as a living and not a dead thing. Let us glance, then, at the country in the state in which the Israelites found it. The ancient tribes of the Rephaim, the Emim, and Zuzim, had faded out, and the descendants of Lot had taken possession of the whole of the land. The children of one of Lot's daughters held the southern region, the district of Moab; those of the other daughter had gone farther north, and gave their own name of Ammon to the land. Their race was a prolific one; and, at the time of the Israelitish invasion, about five hundred years subsequent to the time when Abraham and Lot parted upon Bethel, we find the Moabites and Ammonites great nations. Their character was different. Moab was peaceful and inoffensive; Ammon, warlike and turbulent. The Moabites were quiet herdsmen, possessing admirable grazing lands, and raising great flocks and herds; the Ammonites were the Bedouins of the day, a nomadic, fierce, thriftless race. It is, therefore, easy to make out from the biblical account the boundaries of Moab; but Ammon shades away northward into the hills, and eastward into the desert, in a manner which defies our attempt to establish its limits. Moab consisted of three divisions, each bearing a distinctive name, and each perfectly well to be made out at the present day. The tract lying south of the Wady Mojeb, or Arnon, a stream flowing into the Dead Sea, just north of the well-known peninsula, is alluded to in Scripture as the "field of Moab;" the tract lying between the Arnon and the Jabbok is called the "land of Moab;" while the low tract close by the Jordan and opposite Jericho bears the name of the "plains of Moab." The finest tract for grazing purposes was and still is the second one mentioned, the land of Moab, a fine upland, a broken plateau, bounded on the west by that great mountain-wall which follows the whole course of the Jordan, and broken here and there by hights which rise conspicuously above the elevated plains. It is a country but little known even at the present day; Burckhardt, Seetzen, Buckingham, Irby and Mangles, Tristram, and

a few other bold and enterprising travelers only, having traversed it, and brought us what little we know of it: while the country farther north, the territory of Ammon, has been crossed by a fearless few,—Porter, Wetzstein, and Graham,—in addition to those who have brought us what we know of Moab. Many of the greatest explorers, including such men as Robinson and Stanley, have scarcely set foot upon the land east of the Jordan. The wild character of the Bedouins there, taken in connection with the slight relation of that district to the history of the Jews, has shut it off; and out of the hundreds of travelers who go annually to Jerusalem, Hebron, Nazareth, and Jericho, scarcely one passes the Jordan and treads the land of Moab.

At the time of the Israelitish invasion, the fierce tribe of the Amorites had sent a portion of their large numbers away from the hill-country north of Hebron across the Jordan, to subdue the rich pasture-lands there. Their strength had made them more than a match for the peaceful and inoffensive Moabites; and they had easily wrested from the latter their best land, and driven them into the "field of Moab," the tract south of the Arnon. The Israelites did not pass through this territory; but, having crossed the Zared and then the Arnon, they went farther toward the sun-rising, and entered the comparatively bare and desolate country east of the "land of Moab." The king of the Amorites, Sihon (his name is preserved), had established his capital at Heshbon, a place which bears the same name even to-day (Hesban), and whose ruins, though not important, display the same cisterns which made the fish-pools of Heshbon noted even in Solomon's time. The war against this Amorite king, Sihon, was short and decisive. The whole of the Belka, or country between the Arnon and the Jabbok, passed into the hands of the Israelites.

After the conquest over this formidable "Sihon, king of the Amorites," the Israelites do not appear to have hastened to the Jordan; but, impressed with the conviction that no enemies must be left in their rear to follow and harass them,

they marched far northward, past the Gilead range, to that great and fruitful tract of Bashan, south of Damascus and east of the Sea of Galilee. The capital city, or one of the two capitals, rather, was Edrei, whose ruins, according to Mr. Porter, may be seen even now, on a high, isolated bluff at the south-west corner of the Ledja. But whether this place, or Dera on the Hieromax, designates the site of the ancient Edrei, the journey was a long one northward. The recent discov-

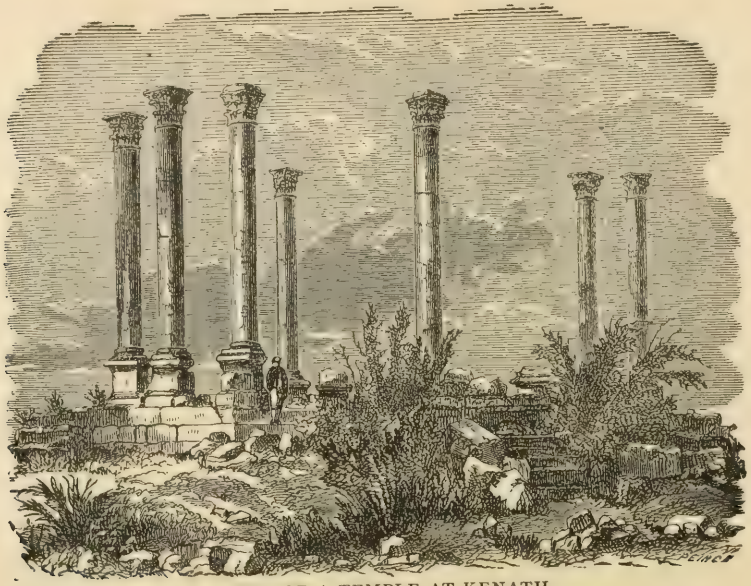


STONE DOOR OF AN ANCIENT HOUSE.
[*Taken from one of Porter's sketches in the district east of the Jordan.*]

eries made by Mr. Porter, and announced in his work called "The Giant Cities of Bashan," are of a very great interest. The construction of the houses, and the size of the sarcophagi found there, are such as to convince him that he has really brought to light the very home and tomb of Og, king of Bashan. However this may be, there is a striking coincidence between the cities of Bashan, as they are described in Deut. iii. 5, and those cities—they can not be called ruins—which

Prof. Porter has brought to light within the last few years. "All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars." All of these features remain, and, in addition to them, places of sepulture, which appear as if intended for persons of no ordinary stature. Moreover, we are distinctly, though only incidentally, told that Og, king of Bashan, remained, of the race of giants; and his iron bedstead was long preserved in token of the gigantic stature of the man.

The Israelites overran the whole of Bashan, subduing Argob, with its threescore cities, that tract of black rock east of the Sea of Galilee, so little known to us till Mr. Porter brought its distinctive characteristics to light. They were then masters of the whole tract east of the Jordan. From the Arnon on the south to Hermon and the borders of Damascus on the north, the land was theirs. It was a tract obviously adapted to pasturage, and immediately caught the eye of the two tribes which were especially eminent for the number and excellence of their flocks. The tribes of Reuben and Gad requested to have their portions assigned to them on the east side of the Jordan, and their request was granted, on the condition that the fighting men should cross the river with the other tribes, and, after the conquest was effected, should return and live with their flocks. The division was as follows: Moab was allowed to retain the territory south of the Arnon, and at the same time to hold the cities of the tract taken by the Israelites from the Amorite king. Indeed, the fact that Moab was always more highly civilized than the tribe of Reuben allowed the two to live side by side in tolerable quietness; the cities Heshbon, Aroer, Dibon, and the rest being held by the Moabites, while the pastoral Reubenites dwelt in tents, and tended their flocks on that fine, level, pasture-land. The territory distinctively held by Reuben, then, was from the Arnon on the south to a line running east and west through Heshbon. It was bounded by the Dead Sea and the Jordan on the west, while eastward the town of Aroer marked its limits. As the territory of Reuben, it comes into no promi-



RUINS OF A TEMPLE AT KENATH.

A vivid sketch of the ancient ruins in the transjordanic region.

nence in the Bible. Long known as Moab, it receives curse on curse; the subtle idolatries practiced there, and, in especial, the worship of its god, Chemosh, having exercised an irresistible charm over the Israelites for many centuries subsequent to the conquest. But Reuben takes an altogether subordinate position. It gives not a hero to Israel, it gives not even a solitary name to the long list of Bible worthies. It sinks into the peaceful occupation of sheep-tending, and gradually disappears, its sons being merged, to a certain extent, in the primitive tribes of the region.

Gad, which took possession of the lands farther north, was of a different stamp. While agriculture was its chosen calling, so that it too wanted to have a share in the rich grazing-lands east of the Jordan, it was tumultuous, wild, martial, and prolific in heroes. While Reuben gave none, Gad gave Elijah and Jephthah, men whose names, in their distinctive way, are among the best remembered in the long procession of Jewish historical characters. The territory of Gad is more indefinitely marked than that of Reuben; but as it was first assigned, it extended from a line drawn east and west through Heshbon northward to the Jabbok, embracing the southern half of the mountains of Gilead. Subsequently, the ambitious, pushing spirit of the Gadites made them more than a match for the warlike and powerful half-tribe of Manasseh, which occupied Bashan and the northern half of the Gilead range, and we see the more southern tribe thrusting itself northward to the very verge of the Hauran. I should not omit to state that in the original allotment to Gad was the whole of the eastern bank of the Jordan, the fertile valley which lies between the river and the rock-wall on the east, and which extends from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea.

There was still another tribe,—one which has been alluded to by name,—Half-Manasseh, which shared in the division of the lands east of the Jordan. The cause which prompted Reuben and Gad to ask for a tract there was not operative with Half-Manasseh. This powerful tribe, one of the most war-

like and grasping of all, craved the privilege of seizing and possessing that natural fastness, the northern half of Gilead, and the almost inaccessible rocks of Argob and of Eastern Bashan. It would seem that the conquest of Og had so far subdued the land, that Israel had no further occasion to fear; yet to enter into it and possess it wholly, required a longer and more stoutly-contested campaign than the speedy one against Og. To accomplish this was the wish, as it was the act, of the powerful half-tribe of Manasseh. This territory, when subdued, comprised that part of Gilead which was north of the Jabbok, and extended north as far as to Hermon. The ancient importance of that grand, snow-crowned peak is testified by the fact that the Bible gives us, in connection with the story of the Israelitish conquests, four names for Hermon, three in addition to its familiar designation,—Sion, or the elevated, the Sidonian name Sirion, and the Amorite name Shenir.

Not more marked is it now, as the natural boundary of Western Palestine, than it was when the Israelites were capturing the district east of the river. It was then the "snowy" Hermon; and one of the names by which the Arabs designate it at the present day likewise means "the snowy."

From the preceding sketch it will be seen that the Israelites broke away at once from the limit which had been set by Abraham when he parted from Lot; indeed, they wandered so far from it that the circle of the Jordan, that rich intervale which accompanied the winding course of the river, originally chosen by Lot, was included in the domain of Gad. The only adherence to the compact between Abraham and Lot is seen in the fact that the Israelites did not attack the Moabites and the Ammonites, both the descendants of Lot by the dark incest of his daughters. The war was against the Amorites and the king of Bashan, not against the distant kinsmen of the invading Israelites.

Only one more people comes prominently into view before we see the Israelites taking their way down into the Jordan Valley opposite Jericho. They are a branch of the Midianites.

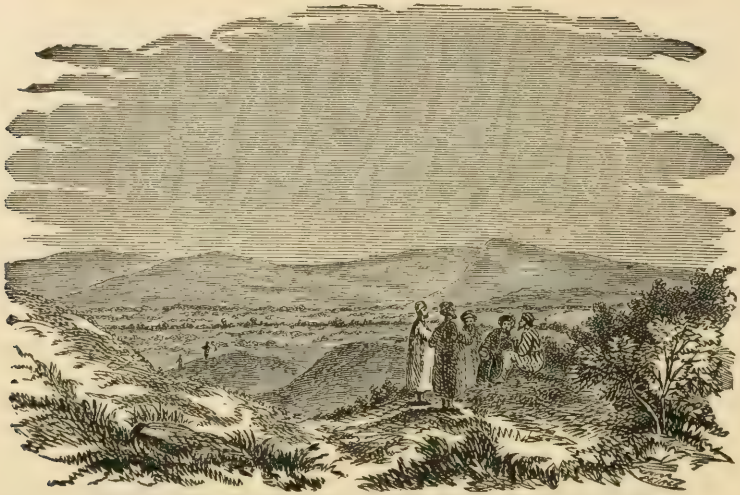


MOUNT HERMON FROM NEAR TIBERIAS.

We have already seen portions of this tribe in the Sinai Peninsula; we have alluded too to their main home on the eastern side of the Gulf of Akabah; but now we discover that they were a tribe very widely scattered, skirting the eastern border of Seir, Moab, and Ammon, and extending as far as to the Euphrates. Balaam, the great heathen prophet, was a Midianite, yet his home was in Mesopotamia. The influence of this corrupt race was only bad; the profligacy and licentiousness which it engendered being so great as to bring down a plague upon the people, and make it necessary for Israel to visit them with an almost exterminating war,—a war in which five of the kings of Midian perished, and in which Balaam, the great prophet, also fell by the sword.

The exact position of the two mountains, which have been made famous as well as interesting, the one by the ascent of Balaam, the other by that of Moses, remains, and will probably always remain, unknown to us. Among the peaks of Moab are many from which the same commanding view could be had which was gained by both Balaam and Moses; for although, as one looks at the rock-wall of Moab from Palestine, it seems to have no commanding summits, yet those who have crossed the Jordan, and explored those almost unvisited spaces, report that the mountains have a much more marked individuality than would be believed possible. According to the testimony of the Englishman Palmer, "When their summits are attained, a wholly new scene bursts upon the view, unlike any thing which could be expected from below, unlike any thing in Western Palestine. A wide table-land appears, tossed about in wild confusion of undulating downs, clothed with rich grasses throughout, and, in the northern parts, with magnificent forests of sycamore, beech, terebinth, ilex, and enormous fig-trees." While the rich, well-wooded, well-watered districts of Moab, Gilead, and Bashan were to be seen, in all those charms which fascinated the heart of Reuben and Gad, the distant view, that across the Jordan, is not to-day, and could hardly have been then, such as to correspond with the

glowing language of the spies who had been sent up from the desert. It may be true, as Stanley suggests, that to one who stands on the hights of Moab and looks westward across the Jordan at the hills of Judah and Ephraim, "their monotonous character is lost, and the range when seen as a whole is in the highest degree diversified and impressive;" yet those brown and treeless hills, and those waterless ravines which could be traced westward from the Jordan Valley, would contrast most unfavorably with the rich and well-watered land east of the river. Robinson testifies that nowhere in the whole course of his wanderings did he meet such a wealth of springs and running brooks as in the district south-east of the Dead Sea. And most of the territory northward is not unworthy to be ranked far beyond Palestine proper in all the elements which enrich a people. The Bible shows us, in its indirect way, that the trans-Jordanic district had from time immemorial been in the possession of the most powerful tribes in the whole region. Those allusions to the Rephaim, the Emim, and Zamzummim, merely indicate that those races of giants held, by the tenure of their might, the most valuable territory of all Southern Syria. On what grounds, then, do we find Moses straining his sight to look across the river, striving to catch a glimpse of what he was not permitted to enter? Caleb and Joshua, his near and trusted friends, had traversed the whole length of Western Palestine, from Beersheba to Dan: he might have learned from them that what lay beyond was not a rival to that which the valor of the Israelites had already secured. The original promise made to Abraham extended to the Euphrates. Without taking one thing into account, it would appear wonderful that the Hebrew leader should have wished to take further risks, and not have settled down into the quiet and secure pastoral life to which the plains of Moab and the slopes of Gilead invited the wearied tribes. Yet, though the Scripture does not hint at what passed in the mind of Moses, we can not doubt that a man so observant as he would see that the country was without natural means of de-



MOUNTAINS OF MOAB, FROM THE HILLS NEAR JERICHO.
The entire range can be seen presenting the aspect of a huge mountain wall.

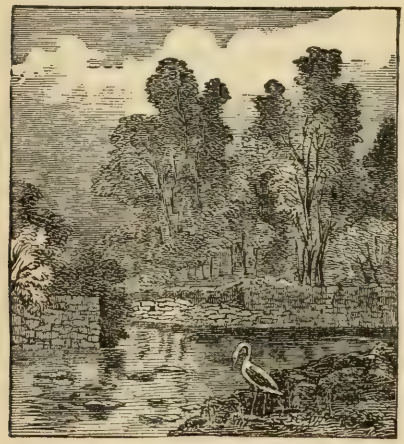
fense. At the north, in Bashan, and in parts of Gilead, the rugged ravines and frowning battlements of rock might serve as a partial protection; yet only a race always in readiness for war, a nation of warrior-shepherds, could hold, with any security, the pasture-lands of the south. As the Emim and Zamzummim had quailed before Chedorlaomer and the other kings of the East, and had at last been exterminated by the Moabites and the Ammonites; as the Ammonites had just yielded to Moses, and even Og, in the intrenchments of Bashan, had confessed him conqueror, so in turn the Israelites might be the prey of some stronger and more disciplined race which should sweep through that unprotected land. Therefore it was, as it appears to me, that his eye measured the long line of hills across the Jordan, traversed the steep gorges which run up westward from the Jordan to the great dorsal ridge of Palestine, and felt secure in the thought that the "mountains of the Amorites," as the great line of water-shed is called in the Bible,—the high lands from Hebron to Shechem,—would afford the most secure and undisturbed shelter to his people, age after age. It is not a little curious that the only tradition claiming any value in that country is the Mahometan one that puts the mountain where Moses died on the west bank of the Jordan, and north-west of the Dead Sea. The ruins of a small mosque attest the mountain of the Moslem tradition. Yet the tale is clearly an idle one. Though the place of Moses' sepulture is closely concealed by the Scriptures, and though we do not know which mountain of the rocky tract Pisgah was consecrated to the Moabite god Nebo, and bore his name, still there can be no doubt that it lay on the eastern side of the Jordan, and confronted the city of Jericho. The spot which has been pointed out with the most probability is a peak a short distance southward of Heshbon, which was ascended by Mr. Porter, and from which a view of surpassing extent could be gained. From that, or any one of the range to which it belongs, Balaam could look across the Dead Sea and see the steep rocks where the Kenites clustered, and which served

them instead of houses; he could also reach with his eye the south country, and discern the tents of the roving Amalekites; and, in the distance, he could descry the blue line of the Mediterranean, over which the ships of Chittim should sail; while far to the south were the purple hills of Edom. Nor is Moses represented as compassing an area any less limited. From Dan, at the extreme north, and under the very shadow of Hermon, to the south country, the home of Abraham and Isaac, from the plain of Jericho to the Mediterranean,—all this is distinctly recorded in the closing verses of Deuteronomy as falling within the scope of his vision. Balaam lived to go down, and was slain fighting against the nation his tongue was constrained to bless, while Moses remained in the mountain and died; "but no man knoweth of his sepulcher to this day."

"On these brows," writes Tristram, "overlooking the mouth of the Jordan, over against Jericho, we halted and gazed on a prospect on which it has been permitted to few European eyes to feast.

"As the eye turns southward toward the line of the ridge on which we were elevated, the peak of Jebel Shihan just stood out behind Jebel Attarus, which opened to reveal to us the situation of Kerak, though not its walls. Beyond and behind these, sharply rose Mts. Hor and Seir, and the rosy granite peaks of Arabia faded away into the distance toward Akabah. Still turning westward, in front of us, two or three lines of terraces reduced the hight of the plateau as it descended to the Dead Sea, the western outline of which we could trace in its full extent, from Usdum to Feshkah. It lay like a long strip of molten metal, with the sun mirrored on its surface, waving and undulating in its farther edge, unseen in its eastern limits, as though poured from some deep cavern beneath our feet. There, almost in the center of the line, a break in the ridge, and a green spot below, marked Engedi, the nest once of the Kenite, now of the wild goat. The fortress of Masada and jagged Shukif rose above the mountain line, but still far below us, and lower too than the ridge

of Hebron, which we could trace as it lifted gradually from the south-west, as far as Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The buildings of Jerusalem we could not see,* though all the familiar points in the neighborhood were at once identified. *There* was the Mount of Olives, with the church at its top, the gap in the hills leading up from Jericho, and the rounded hights of Benjamin on its other side. Still turning northward, the eye was riveted by the deep Ghor [Jordan Valley], with the rich green islets of Ain Sultân and Ain Dûk,—bright twins, nestling, as it were, under the wall of Quarantania. There, closer still beneath us, had Israel's last camp extended, in front of the green fringe which peeped forth from under the terraces in our foreground. The dark, sinuous bed of the Jordan, clearly defined near its mouth, was soon lost in dim haze. Then, looking over it, the eye rested on Gerizim's rounded top; and, farther still, opened the plain of Esdraelon, the shoulder of Carmel, or some other intervening hight just showing at the right of Gerizim; while the distant bluish haze beyond it told us that there was the sea, 'the utmost sea.' It seemed as if but a whiff were needed to brush off the haze and reveal it clearly. Northward, again, rose the distinct outline of unmistakable Tabor, aided by which we could identify Gilboa and Jebel Duhy. Snowy Hermon's top was mantled with clouds, and Lebanon's highest range must have been exactly shut behind it; but in



AIN SULTAN.

* "This must have been from a slight haze, or want of power in our glasses, as the point where we stood is certainly visible from the roof of the English church."

front, due north of us, stretched in long line the dark forests of Ajlun, bold and undulating, with the steep sides of mountains here and there whitened by cliffs, terminating in Mt. Gilead, behind Es Salt. To the north-east, the vast Hauran stretched beyond, filling in the horizon line to the Belka, between which and the Hauran [Bashan] there seems to be no natural line of separation. The tall range of Jebel Hauran, behind Bozrah, was distinctly visible.

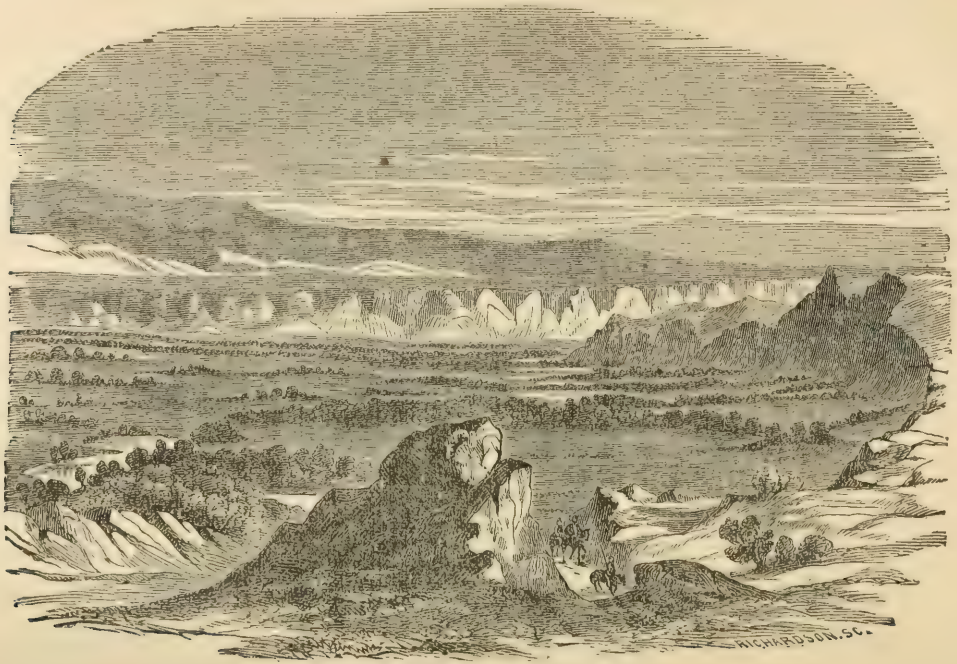
"We did indeed congratulate each other on the privilege of having gazed on this superb panorama, which will live in memory's eye. 'And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar.'" (Deut. xxxiv. 1–3.)

It was a descent of more than four thousand feet from the summit of those Abarim mountains which witnessed the vision of Balaam and Moses, to the "plains of Moab," the Scripture name for the eastern side of the Jordan Valley at Jericho. From the ordinary level of that table-land was a descent of about two thousand feet. The course of the Israelites may be traced with apparent certainty down the Wady Hesban, a ravine which descends from Heshbon, to the Jordan, and which still retains the name of the ancient city which lay at its head. They came out upon a place where even now may be seen the acacias which gave the place its name of Abel Shittim, "the groves of acacia-trees."

"The difference between the upper and lower ground in respect to soil and climate is as great as can be imagined. In aspect, temperature, and products, the valley is tropical in character, so that the Hebrews passed as if into another zone when they came down into it. In its southern extremity, where it opens on the gloomy, mist-covered waters of the asphaltic lake, it is not less than twelve miles in width. There, open and level on all sides, it forms a space on which many armies might be encamped. Over its whole extent it was

lined and striped by thick belts of verdure, in its numerous groves of acacia and nukb, and of palms. The general direction of the valley itself for the sixty miles between Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea is tolerably straight; but deep in its very bottom the river winds—it has been said that it wriggles—along like a gigantic serpent [so that the length of the channel is not sixty, but two hundred miles]. The ground descends steeply all the way to the southern opening of the valley at the head of the Dead Sea; and its depth and closeness, as well as the reflection from the heated rocks on either side, give a tropical character to the climate. The square, monotonous range of hills that support the eastern highlands rises up on that side for nearly a hundred miles, and on the other are the gray, parched hills of Ephraim and Jordan, broken and irregular, and of much smaller altitude. The Israelites had never looked, in one view, on such an ample space, so clothed in what would seem to them a boundless profusion of luxuriant vegetation; and then there was a rapid stream, flowing deep in its low channel through the thickly-clustered trees, under whose cool shades they could stay and rest in voluptuous indulgence. The aged leaders would think less of the Jordan when they remembered the broad waters of the Nile, and the fatness of the Egyptian soil; but for the multitudes, this was the first river that they had seen; and not even in the fertile and beautiful region above them, whence they had descended, was there more exuberant abundance, especially at the season when they came into the valley, which was the full harvest-time, when it was covered with the richest crops, and when the trees were thick with the blossoming promise of their luscious fruit. The depth of the valley, and the hights on either side reflecting the sun's rays, made the climate hot and relaxing, especially at the season when they encamped in it. But they could bear this the more easily on account of the ample shade which they found in the acacia grove where they were stationed." *

*From Drew's Scripture Lands.



VIEW OF THE JORDAN VALLEY.

Before we follow the Israelites across the Jordan, we must glance a moment at that allotment of Western Palestine which was made by Moses,—we know not just how long before his death,—and the details of which he received in part from the report of the spies. The account is given in the thirty-fourth chapter of Numbers, and, with some slight modifications of the eastern boundary, in the forty-seventh of Ezekiel. Though some of the minor places have not as yet been identified with existing sites, still enough remains to show how he marked out the boundaries of the Israelitish territory, and how carefully he adapted himself to the natural frontiers of the country. The southern border he defines to run from the south-eastern extremity of the Dead Sea across the Arabah, taking in Kadesh-barnea, and skirting Edom, to pass on by the steep ascent of Akrabbim, the last pass which led from the desert up to the hill-country, and then to run westward through the towns of Hazar-addar and Azmon (neither identified with certainty) to Wady el Arish, an important ravine which runs from the heart of the Sinai Peninsula north-eastward, and emerges upon the Mediterranean shore at the old city of Rhinocolura, south-west of Gaza. This ravine bears uniformly in the Bible the name "River of Egypt," it being considered the beginning of the Egyptian domain. The southern border ended naturally at the sea. The western was the Mediterranean coast-line northward to the point where the great Lebanon range runs down almost to the shore. This would be the natural boundary, and this was at once accepted as the place where the northern line would commence. The stations on this northern border were Mt. Hor, the entrance of Hamath, Zedad, Ziphron, and Hazar-enan. Of these we must say that Mt. Hor is probably to be identified with the whole Lebanon range; no other prominent elevation, or system of elevations, in that region would seem to answer the conditions. By the entrance to Hamath is meant, with much probability, the narrow valley between the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon, which was the most striking



AQUEDUCT AND PART OF THE TOWN OF HAMAH, (ANCIENT HAMATH.)
From Laborde.

feature to a man of Palestine as he went northward, and passed between these great chains on his way to the important city of Hamath.

From the "entrance of Hamath" the border-line was drawn north-east toward the city of Hamath, then south-east by Ziphron, Zedad and Hazar-enan. (Num. xxxiv. 8, 9.)

"Hamath," writes Mr. Porter, "is a quaint old city. If one could fancy Pompeii restored and repeopled with men and women, whose moldering bones are now being dug up from its ruins, it would not present a greater contrast to the modern cities of the West than Hamath. For thirty centuries or more, life has been at a stand-still there. Everything is patriarchal, —costumes, manners, salutations, occupations. The venerable elders who, with turbaned heads, flowing beards, and flowing robes, sit daily in the gates, might pass for the elders of the children of Heth, who bargained with Abraham in the gates of Kirjath-arba; and the Arab sheiks, who ever and anon pass in and out, armed with sword and spear, are no unworthy representatives of the fiery Ishmael. There is no town in the world in which primeval life can be seen in such purity as in Hamath. The people glory in it. No greater insult could be offered to them than to contrast Hamath with the cities of the infidel. The site of Hamath is picturesque. It stands in the deep glen of the Orontes, whose broad, rapid stream divides it through the center. The banks are lined with poplars, and queer houses rise like terraces along the steep slopes. Four bridges span the stream and connect the two quarters of the city. The remains of antiquity are nearly all gone; the citadel is a vast mound of rubbish; the mosques are falling to ruin; and the private houses, though in a few cases splendidly decorated within, are shapeless piles of mud and timber. Hamath has still thirty thousand inhabitants."

Of the other stations on the northern border, Zedan, Ziphron, and Hazar-enan, there is not much to be said, so unfixed is our knowledge regarding those localities. Mr. Porter in his "Five Years in Damascus," and in his later book, "The

Giant Cities of Bashan," has, it is true, conjecturally identified these places with some Arab villages visited by him; still, notwithstanding the general sobriety of his judgment, I think that in this case he has allowed his fancy to mislead him. We have not yet the data for laying down with exactness the northern and a part of the eastern boundary-line.

The eastern border, given in the forty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, differs from that assigned by Moses in the thirty-fourth chapter of Numbers. The main difference in the two, speaking briefly, is that Moses excluded the kingdom of Damascus from the territory which he promised, while Ezekiel represents that kingdom as included in what appeared to him in his vision. According to Moses' assignment, the eastern line was to run southward from Hazar-enan to Riblah; thence to the sea of Chinnereth, or Galilee; and so on down the Jordan to the Dead Sea. Neither Shepham nor Riblah, on the eastern border, is known; Ain, the fountain spoken of in connection with this boundary, has been thought by Porter not to be the great spring of Banias; but not only does the importance of that fountain indicate the probability that it was the one laid down in the Mosaic narration, but the older authorities agree in assigning the name "Ain," or *the* fountain, to the great Jordan spring of Banias. The exact laying-down of the Mosaic boundary-line is unnecessary; and we can see enough to enable us to discern how clearly he described the leading geographical features of the land,—how his mind grasped the truth that the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges must terminate the northern border, and that the eastern one must follow the line which separates the Anti-Lebanon slopes from the great desert on the east. Here was the only place which demanded rigid knowledge and sound judgment; and Moses demonstrated, even in this, the same wonderful command of resources which characterized his whole course.

CHAPTER VII.

PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN, AND BEGINNING OF THE CONQUEST.

Fording the Jordan—Depth in Summer—In Spring—In Winter—Melting Snows of Hermon—When the Israelites Crossed—Harvest Season—No Bridges then over the Jordan—Comparison with our American Rivers—Gilgal, the Place of the First Encampment—What Remains of It—Ruins of Jericho—Palms and Roses of that City—Vices of the Arabs There—The Man who Fell among Thieves—Natural Highway up to the Mountains—Route from Jericho to Ai—Taking of Ai—Ebal and Gerizim—Setting Up of the Law—Visit of the Gibeonites—Their Disguise—The Five Kings—Joshua as a Military Leader—Battle of Beth-horon—The Scene of the Contest—Slaughter of the Kings—"Sun, Stand Still"—The Great Miracle—Battle of Hazor.



HE passage of the Jordan by the Israelites brings us to the consideration of some of the geographical characteristics of the river. The place was "over against Jericho," and probably not far from that Helu ford which was attempted by Robinson without success, and which has been crossed without swimming by no traveler, so far as I am aware, but the brave and zealous Seetzen, in 1807. The Jordan is not fordable at all at the time of the spring flood; its muddy torrent is both too deep and too swift. Seetzen waited at least a week for the waters to subside so far as to allow him to venture to cross, and the transit, even when he did affect it, was full of peril. In the summer-time, the Jordan can be crossed at countless places; and the repeated references in the Old Testament to passages across the river must be explained by the ease with which the river could be forded in summer. But in the spring it was and is still different. The winter rains fill the wadies with a rushing, impetuous tide, and the sides of Hermon early begin to pour

down the floods which the heat of March and April calls out from the snow-masses. To ford the river then would be impossible. Yet it was just then that the Israelites effected the passage. It was the harvest season, the last of March and the first of April; it was within four days of the feast of the Passover, which occurred at the same time. I am as much impressed as one can be with the draughts made upon our faith by the story of the miracle; yet one is shut up to the necessity of accepting it. We learn the time of the year incidentally; it is not wrought in as an essential part of the story. Moreover, there is no evidence that any boats or bridges were in use then or in latter times to effect the passage of the Jordan; the ford was then as now (except where south of the Sea of Galilee some Roman bridges remain) the only method of transit. It is singular how faithfully the Jordan maintains at the present time the same characteristics which it is represented in the Bible as having. It was a larger stream then, for it drained a better-wooded country than it does now; but the same dark, muddy water which it had then it has now; and even the same thickets which lined its banks at the time of Elisha are there at the present day. At the time of the spring flood the stream is about one hundred feet in width; narrow, compared with our American rivers, but deep and swift. We find, on the part of the Israelites, no sign of a desire to wait till the waters should subside. The same willingness to trust to the arm of God which had characterized Moses at the Red Sea now filled the heart of Joshua at the Jordan. The Israelites wind down to the river from the acacia-groves where they had tarried, the waters part, they go through, and, from the dry bed, they take up twelve stones to set up upon the western bank in memorial of the great deed which had been wrought in their behalf.

Still, while it is impossible to see how the herds and the flocks, the women and the children, the tabernacle and its service, the embalmed body of Joseph, and the whole mass of household goods and utensils, could be transferred safely to the

western bank of the Jordan without the intervention of miracle; yet at that season able and sure-footed men could cross either by swimming, or as Seetzen did in the spring of 1807. And thus we know they did do, for the spies entered Jericho and returned to the east bank of the river before the general transit was effected.*

Gilgal, the place of the Israelites' first encampment west of the Jordan, lay on the south-east of Jericho, between it and the river. A few shapeless ruins mark the site of what long continued the most sacred locality among the Jews, for here the ark remained till it was transferred to Shiloh, upon the crest of the mountain ridge of Palestine. It lay about three miles from the fords of the Jordan, and from one to two miles from Jericho. There were several places bearing the name of Gilgal; but this was the one to which the Hebrew

*A very accomplished English traveler, Mr. Tristram, crossed the Jordan a few years ago at the time of the spring flood. To do it, made it necessary to ride horses across, while Arabs swam by the side and held the bridle. Mr. Tristram's account is so brief and graphic, that I gladly quote it, as it throws light upon the difficulties which beset an army without horses, and accompanied by women, children, and droves of cattle. The place where Mr. Tristram crossed the Jordan was a few miles above the ford of Jericho. He says: "On both sides the space was thronged by about fifty tall, wild-looking Bedouins, all stark naked, swimming and riding a number of bare-backed horses. For a moment my heart beat quick, as two naked men seized my horse, and a third snatched my gun from me. I felt as if set upon by naked savages. C—— was ahead of me, and I watched him and his horse led into the water by a naked Bedouin, who had taken off the bridle, and held his steed by the halter, while another hung on to his tail, and a third kept on the lee side of the saddle. The stream, rushing with tremendous force, was about fifteen feet deep. Meantime my saddle-bags were carried off and placed on a man's head; and, having taken off my outer garment, I committed myself and horse to the torrent, his halter being held by a mounted guide. The ford was very difficult and oblique, but the leader's horse was evidently experienced; while an expert swimmer kept to leeward of my saddle, and held my leg close to my horse. Following a little way with the stream, we landed on the other side. Soon we had all landed; and now the scene was of the wildest and strangest beauty. It was such as one might expect to see in a picture of Indians crossing an American river, or of the war in New Zealand, graced by the accompaniments of almost tropical vegetation. We agreed that such a spectacle was sufficient to repay all the negotiations and trouble of reaching the Jordan."

mind turned for ages with instinctive reverence. The twelve stones which were taken up from the bed of the river were carried to the hill of Gilgal and piled up there; the whole of the Israelites were circumcised there; and in the immediate neighborhood of Gilgal the school of the prophets sat nourishing itself from the hallowed memories of the past.

But faint memorials remain at the present day of that opulent, proud, and powerful city of Jericho, with its walls and towers, which confronted the Israelites directly after crossing the Jordan. Near the profuse spring known as that of the Sultan, there are indeed unmistakable marks of the great natural fertility of that truly tropical plain; for, lying as it does thirteen hundred feet below the level of the sea, and shut in as it is by the bare rock-walls on both sides of the Ghor, the place has almost the temperature of an oven. A single tower, thirty feet square and forty feet high, is the most conspicuous object which remains of the Jericho of Herod's time; but of the primitive Jericho, that of Joshua's day, not a vestige is left. Some of those mounds which dot the plain might be found, if opened, to contain fragments of the ancient walls and towers, yet there will hardly be encountered a traveler enterprising enough to try to pierce the mystery of those hillocks. Fragments of arches, aqueducts, and paved roads may be seen in the neighborhood of the modern filthy village of Er Riha; but they are only faint indications at best of that city which, although brought to ruins so early in the history of Palestine, yet blossomed up again into such luxuriant life. Not a trace now remains to show why it was called the City of Palms, yet this tree has waved over the site of Jericho since the beginning of the present century. The rose of Jericho has utterly vanished, however, and little that depends upon the aid of man is found in that fertile valley to-day but scanty crops of barley and millet and maize. The same vices which characterized the oldest known cities of the fertile plain, Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar, characterize the filthy Arabs who inhabit the huts

of Er Riha; nor can we be forgetful of the occupation of the woman who gave the spies reception within her own house. Licentiousness, effeminacy, bestiality, have always been the besetting sins of that tropical valley; and never, from the time of its capture down to the time of the Saviour, does Jericho appear to have fallen so low as at the present time. Yet even in the Saviour's day the narrow pass which leads up to Jerusalem was the favorite resort of robbers, as it is to-day; and nowhere in Palestine is it more necessary to be on one's guard. The parable of the Good Samaritan has been re-enacted within our own day, an Englishman being the man who "fell among thieves."

The site of Jericho is about seven miles from the banks of the Jordan, and the view from the old tower commands a view of the whole extent of intervale. Much of the land is parched and blasted; that to the south, and lying between Er Riha and the Dead Sea, is a desert. No doubt the whole place has been so changed in its outward aspect, that one of the inhabitants of ancient Jericho, could he revisit the scene, would scarcely recognize the fair, fertile tract which the river-bottoms once were, in the sterile plain of the present day, showing only after the heavy rains or near the great Sultan's Spring, what is the natural capacity of the soil.

The natural highway from Jericho up to the great watershed of Palestine is not the precipice-lined gorge which runs from Jerusalem down to the Jordan by way of Bethany. It is the way which follows the broad and well-known Wady Suweinit for a distance, and then, under a changed name, runs on to Bethel. There are, indeed, three minor wadies which radiate from Wady Suweinit; but the one which emerges at Bethel is the most direct and easy. Strange to say, however, that tract is most inadequately explored; the great road by which Joshua went up to the summit of the hill-country, and the system of wadies which lies in the immediate vicinity of Bethel and Ai, are not known as they ought to be, though the road was one of those most familiar



VIEW ON THE ROAD FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO.

WITH THE PLAIN OF JORDAN, THE NORTHERN END OF THE DEAD SEA, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE MOUNTAINS OF MOAB.

The scene of the passage of the Israelites under Joshua, Josh. iii.; of Elijah's translation, II. Kings ii.; of the healing of Bartimeus, Luke xviii.; of the devotion of Zaccheus, Luke xix.; and of the parable of the good Samaritan, Luke x. 30, 37.

From an Original Photograph in the possession of the Author.

to the Israelites. Not only did they take it in their conquering march from Jericho to Ai, but that was the road which they must follow when they went down to offer their sacrifices at Gilgal. Yet the general nature of the pass is known; we can see the thirty thousand men marching up to Ai, south-east of Bethel and in full sight of it, though its ruins are not identified with certainty; we can see Joshua cunningly sending his select champions into a high, unseen place beyond the city, while he, with the main body, encamped before it, and then withdrawing down the valley toward Jericho as if unable to take the city. We see the men of Ai, falling into the snare, passing confidently from the walls of their city, and pressing rapidly down toward the Jordan in pursuit of the fleeing Israelites. Then we see the delegation, five thousand strong, it would appear, emerging from their ambuscade between Bethel and Ai, and pressing after the men of Ai. Joshua then turns and stems the descending tide of Canaanitish mountaineers. Caught between the two forces, the men of Ai are utterly cut off, and their city reduced to ruins. It was, of course, a momentous victory, for it opened the whole line of mountain-land to them, and the Israelites could press on without hindrance northward or southward. It was in endeavoring to make just such an ascent, south of the Dead Sea, (see p. 145,) and to reach the high land of Southern Palestine, that they were driven back to Hormah, in the Arabah, and compelled to spend those thirty-eight hopeless years of wandering. The military genius of Joshua shines out conspicuously in the first instance where he needed to use it. Moses had lived just as long as a Moses was needed, and when new emergencies rose and new talents were required, God had the right man ready for the field.

The main camp remained at Gilgal, by Jericho, even after Ai was taken; but the next move of any importance was the setting-up of the tables of the law on Ebal and Gerizim, the two mountains between which lies that plain of Moreh, or Shechem, where Abraham lingered long enough to erect an

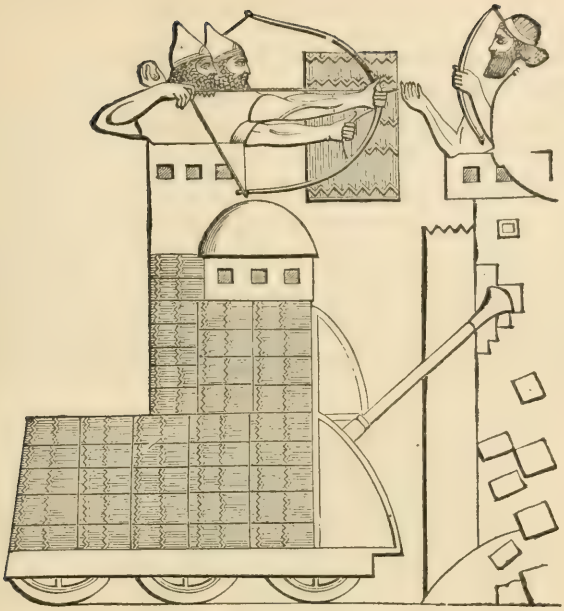
altar, and where Jacob lived till the altercations of his sons with the Canaanites drove him from the place. Under their shadow is to be seen even now Jacob's well and the reputed tomb of Joseph. It was on Ebal that half of the tribes stood and uttered the curses on those who should disobey the law; it was on Gerizim that the other half stood and recited those impressive blessings that are recorded in Deuteronomy. It was on Ebal, that, according to the Jewish reading of the Pentateuch (Deut. xxvii. 4), an altar inscribed with the law was to be set up; whereas the Samaritan version has Gerizim in the well-remembered passage. The differences in the two mountains are somewhat marked, although, perhaps, not as much so as the accounts of most travelers would lead us to infer. Ebal is a steep, rocky, bare, and uninteresting peak, and has almost never been ascended: a few shapeless ruins are almost all the human traces which it offers to the curiosity. Its hight has not been closely ascertained, but it is computed to be not much short of thirty-five hundred feet. Gerizim, which is about five hundred feet lower, has been spoken of by most travelers as a "smiling" mountain, covered with verdure, and showing on its very face why it was chosen as the mount of blessings. This is surely an exaggerated statement of what rests upon a very slight foundation. Indeed, it would not be right to omit saying that some of our most reliable modern tourists deny Gerizim any superiority whatever in charm over Ebal. It has from the remotest period been accounted a sacred mountain; and it is supposed by Stanley to have been the hight to which Abraham brought Isaac for sacrifice; though I can not yield assent to this view. Gerizim is the resort of pilgrims every year to witness the celebration of the passover; and one of the most interesting portions of Stanley's Lectures on the Jewish Church is that appendix in which he gives his own account, as an eye-witness, of the celebration, in this age, of that ancient feast, with ritualistic observances little changed by the lapse of four thousand years.

The law having been set up on Ebal or Gerizim (according

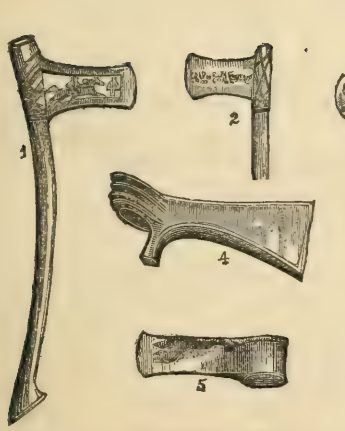
as the Jews or Samaritans are right in their respective readings), the next step of the Israelites was to move quickly southward along the Palestine water-shed, and then down the ravine leading from Bethel to Gilgal and Jericho. It was during the brief pause after their return that the memorable visit of the Gibeonites occurred, which led Joshua into a net, not so dangerous as that which he set for the people of Ai, but quite as subtle. I need not remind the reader how the inhabitants of Gibeon and the neighboring cities of Beeroth, Kirjath-jearim, and Chephirah took moldy bread and burst wine-skins, and old clothes and worn-out shoes, and traversed the ten or twelve miles which separated their homes from Gilgal, and pretended to come from a distant country for the purpose of testifying their allegiance to the God of the Israelites. The trick was at length discovered, and, although Joshua could not forfeit his word to spare their lives, they were degraded into hewers of wood and drawers of water, and compelled to discharge those laborious and menial services for the Israelites age after age. Those places have all been brought to light by the indefatigable Robinson. Their present names are but little changed from those they bore in ancient times, Gibeon being Geba, Beeroth Bireh, and Chephirah Kefur. Kirjath-jearim has lost its name, however, and is to be identified with Kuryet-el-enab. They lie from six to ten miles north of Jerusalem, a little west of the line of water-shed, Kirjath-jearim being at the head of an important wady which leads toward the Mediterranean coast.

The anger which was kindled in the hearts of the Canaanite kings against the Gibeonites for not resisting the invaders at the point of the sword, led directly to that great and decisive battle of Beth-horon which put the Israelites in substantial possession of the country. The five kings who conspired to destroy Gibeon for its pusillanimous conduct, were those of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon,—all of them places of unquestionable importance. Of Jerusalem and Hebron I need not speak, except to say that these two cities,

which have before met us only in the attitude of peace, here confront us with the stern face of war. Abraham and Jacob were men who passed up and down through Palestine, cherishing a promise of future possession, but taking no steps to attain it, and carefully abstaining from coming into conflict with the people, always buying land instead of wresting it, and speaking not imperiously but peaceably to the Canaanites. But when Joshua came, there was a change; and the chief city of the Jebusites and that of the Hittites arrayed themselves against the man who came not with flocks and herds, but at the head of a powerful army. Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon lay south-west of Jerusalem and west of Hebron; the first of them on the western margin of the hill-country, the last two on the rich plain below. Jarmuth is identified beyond much doubt with the modern village of Jarmu; Lachish and Eglon, with Um Lakis and Ajlan. It was not at those places, however, that the kings encountered the Israelites. They united their forces and marched up to Gibeon, on the high land north of Jerusalem, the modern Geba, for the purpose of destroying it. The people sent a messenger directly to Joshua at Gilgal. The Israelitish army was at once on the move up the rocky defiles which lead from the Valley of the Jordan to the top of the mountain-land; their first duty being to defend their new and crafty allies, the Gibeonites; their next, to go forward and capture the country for themselves. The news reached Joshua in the night, and before it was day the Israelitish host had traversed the ravine, and were before the walls of Gibeon. And then began that memorable battle of Beth-horon, one of the decisive struggles of the world. The Israelites pursued their enemy northward for about four miles, over a tract sufficiently broken, but along the main coast-line of the country. At Upper Beth-horon, its place perfectly marked at the present day by the village of Upper Beit-ur, the Canaanites turned down to the west through the broad and steep pass which led to the village of Lower Beth-horon. It is the same pass which is taken by all the heavy



ANCIENT BATTERING RAM.



ANCIENT AXES.

1, 2, 3, Egyptian.—*Wilkinson.* 4, 5, Assyrian.—*British Museum.*



ANCIENT BATTLE-AXES, POLE-AXE, MACES, AND CLUB.

travel between Jaffa and Jerusalem. The lighter travel comes up by a pass west of Jerusalem, and more direct; but the pass of Beit-ur, the ancient Beth-horon, is one of the most striking features of the country. Mr. Grove says graphically of it, "With the upper village the descent commences; the road, rough and difficult even for the mountain-paths of Palestine, now over sheets of smooth rock flat as the flagstones of a London pavement, now over the upturned edges of the limestone strata, and now amongst the loose rectangular stones so characteristic of the whole of this district. There are, in many



TORTOISE SHIELD.

places, steps cut, and other marks of the path having been artificially improved." Near the lower end of the path is the side-valley passing by the low hill on which stood the village of Ajalon, the modern Yalo, and whose name is always remembered in connection with Joshua's prayer, as he set forward that eventful morning. It is plain that the Canaanites were taken by surprise, when, in the cool of the day, they found the Hebrew troops upon them. There was a continual

rout all the way from Gibeon to Upper Beth-horon; and, to add to all, just as the Canaanites were taking that steep and dangerous pass from Upper to Lower Beth-horon, a tremendous hailstorm broke upon them, effecting more slaughter than even the arms of the Israelites. This pitiless storm followed them till they reached the city of Azekah, identified by Porter with the modern village of Zechariah, on the verge of the highlands south-west of Jerusalem. It would appear that the Israelites did not pass on at once to Azekah, but in the early morning, the victory being complete, left the hailstorm on the western slope of the hill-country to do its devastating work, while they went back to Gilgal. But soon a messenger brought word that the five kings had taken refuge in a cave at Makkedah, near Azekah. Up from Gilgal on the same day the Israelites marched, reached the highlands about Gibeon, and swept down the pass of Beth-horon to Makkedah. The slaughter of the kings, their burial in the cave, and the destruction of Makkedah, closed that memorable day. It does not need any argument to convince us of the miraculous answer to Joshua's prayer, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon." The march up from Gilgal to Gibeon was effected in the night, it is true; but between the break of the next day and its close, Joshua marched from Gibeon to Upper Beth-horon, some distance down the pass, back to Gilgal, up from Gilgal to Gibeon again, and down the whole length of the pass to Makkedah. These things, being told in a simple, unaffected manner, would seem to shut us up to one of two conclusions: either that the Israelites could pass over rough roads and through narrow defiles with supernatural speed, not to speak of the immense draughts on their energy and strength, or that the day was of no common length that could permit them to do all this. The distance traversed can not have been less than forty miles, not to reckon the night march. The nature of the roads is such that to go up from Gilgal to Gibeon and back in a single day is all that strong travelers can accomplish. The whole route

is now, and must have been then, one with which hardly any mountain-path that any of us are familiar with can be compared. Twenty miles of such toilful marching through the defiles and up the declivities of the White Hills of New Hampshire would task the powers of the strongest man to the utmost; yet here is a whole army doing a feat of twice that magnitude. I am aware that the miraculous prolonging of the day of that battle is one of the special targets of those who hold the supernatural element of the Bible up to ridicule; but I confess that the power of doing all that Joshua and his men did that day without supernatural help seems just as opposed to all that we know of human possibilities as the prolonging of the day can have been.

There remained after the battle of Beth-horon but one more task for Joshua to do, and that was to conquer the North. The people of the North seem to have been stronger, and, on the whole, capable of being better united than the people of the South, capable of entering into a confederation. The reason of this lies in the fact that Palestine is open to attack only on the north.

On the borders of the waters of Merom, or at a point southwest of Merom (we know not precisely where), lay a city called Hazor, the king of which was Jabin, or the Wise. Jabin appears to have been the most important man of his age and of that part of the country. Hazor *may* have been the strongest hold of all the cities at the North, but not necessarily; Jabin, however, appears to have been the ablest man of his time. After Joshua had conquered the South country it was clear that he would push his victorious columns to the North. The king of Hazor made a league with all the kings in the entire north of Palestine. It was an immense confederacy that he called together. It extended south as far as Jerusalem, west as far as to the extreme point of Mt. Carmel and the city of Dor, eastward as far as the plains of the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and north to the valley lying between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains,—a strong



LAKE MEROM, FROM THE SOUTH

confederacy of disciplined soldiers under able leaders. It seemed as if that conspiracy must certainly crush the victorious Joshua. It was far stronger in every sense than the body that had met him at the South. The host assembled at the waters of Merom, where a new kind of tactics could be brought into the field. The Israelites fought on foot. The different races who lived in the country on the north and the plains north were able to use chariots and horses. We can hardly conceive anything more unequal than the contest between Joshua and his undisciplined Israelites on the one hand, and that strong and disciplined army on the other hand, strengthened by chariots and horses. All men not used to war are panic stricken by horses, but when we add to this those chariots which were armed on the side with iron scythes, we may well understand that the hearts of the Israelites were appalled. But Joshua seems equal to the occasion, and using the tactics he pursued at the previous battle, he came suddenly upon them at the waters of Merom, and appears to have swept them all from the field.

The story of that battle is not told in detail as is the battle of Beth-horon. It appears to have been done at a single stroke; one great charge, and the whole was over, and the entire north country passed into the hands of Joshua. And thus by these two simple battles, the story of which is told so simply in the Bible, the whole conquest was obtained. We are apt to think that the book of Joshua, unless we read it more than most people do, is a story of continuous victories. It is not so. There are but two. There was a great battle and victory at the South, which gave them possession of the whole south country, and one at the North giving them possession of the country north of Galilee and the plains. We who were a few years since so astonished at the seven days' campaign which made Prussia master of Austria, have reason to be still more surprised at this series of events in the very morning of the world, so quickly achieved, and with such simple means.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALLOTMENT AMONG THE TWELVE TRIBES.

Full Description of the Allotment in the Bible—Retention of the Ancient Names in the Mouth of the Arabs—Robinson and Smith's Discoveries—The Three Tribes East of the Jordan, Reuben, Gad, and Half-Manasseh—The Beautiful Land of Bashan—The Inequalities in Western Palestine in Respect to Soil—A Wonderful System of Compensations—Only One Tribe Fares Badly—Territory of Judah—Its Advantages—Benjamin—Its Sacred Localities—Dan—Its Narrowness and Subsequent Emigration—Ephraim—Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulon—The Cities of Refuge—Moses' Knowledge of the Land—Site of Shiloh and its Discovery by Robinson.

THE first important event after the completion of the conquest was the division of the country among the twelve tribes. Respecting this apportionment, the Scripture narrative is remarkably full and explicit; it would be the hight of injustice to criticise it, for there is not another existing record of conquest so remarkably detailed as is this ancient book which records the bold and dashing achievements of Joshua. And so wonderful is the preservation in the mouth of the wandering Arabs who inhabit Palestine, of the primitive Hebrew names, that it would be quite practicable, there is little reason to doubt, to work out quite definitely the limits of each tribe, had travelers' attention been sufficiently directed to this thing. In the South, this has indeed been the case, and two Americans, Robinson and Smith, have discovered so many of the old names still clinging to the villages of the land that it has been possible to designate with much definiteness the boundaries of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Dan. But almost no travelers have carefully explored the hill-country of Galilee, the territory of

which was divided among the tribes of Asher, Naphtali and Zebulun, and we can map them only approximately. It is very much to be desired that some acute observer and some careful and thorough Arabic scholar might go through that region as Robinson and Smith went through the district held by the more southern tribes, and endeavor to disinter the names which are given with such remarkable detail by the author of the book of Joshua, and which almost unquestionably lie buried but lightly beneath the Arabic names of towns and villages of the north country. But until that is done, we shall have to confess that our knowledge about the exact boundaries of the northern and middle and eastern tribes is not very exact: still we have enough for all practical purposes. We can distinguish, for example, what was the soil, and what the natural resources in the possession of each tribe: and we know the great, salient features of the landscape enjoyed by each. It is only to gratify an antiquarian curiosity that we need to know more: yet that curiosity is strong enough and the need of an exact map of the country partitioned among the tribes, great enough to warrant a party of scholars going into that field with a determination to exhaust it. It would seem at least as important as the search for the North Pole, the Antarctic Continent or the sources of the Nile.

Three of the tribes, Reuben, Gad and Half-Manasseh, had their domain assigned to them on the east bank of the Jordan. They were very rich in flocks and herds, and had no sooner seen that country in their journey towards the promised land, than they longed to possess it. Their desire was met on one condition, namely that their men of war should cross the river with the other tribes, and do good military service there in the work of conquering the country, and that after that should be ended, they might return and settle down on that fat and fruitful domain. There is little doubt that the former condition of the tract east of the Jordan was then very much as it is at the present time, a rich, well-watered pasture-land, admirably adapted to grazing, covered

with broad-reaching, noble trees, and altogether delightful. Though it is much too insecure at the present time for safety, and has in consequence been very little visited, still the few travelers who have explored the district of ancient Moab, and the country north of it, have uniformly testified to its great and luxuriant beauty. Its stately oaks, its numerous rivers and springs, its fine reaches of rich pasture-land, its fertile hill-sides, and its broad, loamy plains, are the admiration of every beholder. It was this beautiful country which fell to Reuben, Gad and Half-Manasseh. I will not try to define their exact limits, although the boundaries are much more easily followed than those of the tribes of Galilee. Any one can if he wishes, look out all the stations, and locate them on the map. But it is sufficient for our present purpose to say that Reuben's tract was bounded on the south by the river Arnon, a well-known stream which enters the Dead Sea about midway between its northern and southern extremes, and on the north by a line running eastward from the northern end of the Dead Sea, then turning north-eastward, and passing indefinitely on until it was lost in the desert. The wady, running westward from Heshbon down to the valley of the Jordan, which was traversed by the Israelites on their march into Western Palestine, accurately enough defines the northern frontier of the territory of Reuben. The tribe although descending from the oldest son, was in no way remarkable, and was chiefly noted, for its bucolic, tranquil disposition. Out of Reuben sprang not a single man who reached any eminence in Israel. The people of this tribe lived in tents, and pursued strictly the employments of an agricultural folk; and in the midst of their grazing lands they permitted the cities to stand and be occupied by the former inhabitants, who were clearly on a higher plain of civilization than themselves. There is little allusion to the fate of Reuben after the close of the story of the conquest, and they had returned to their wives and little ones, their tents and sheep-folds on the east side of the Jordan.

Gad, a much more robust and lawless tribe, occupied the territory directly north of Reuben. Their southern boundary was in general terms a line drawn eastward from the north extremity of the Dead Sea, and their northern was at the first the torrent stream of the Jabbok; but at a subsequent period, the wild, irrepressible nature of the Gadites caused them to make a bold push northward, and win the territory extending up to the border of the great Hauran plain. North of Gad was



BEERSHEBA.
From an original sketch in Tristram's valuable work, "The Land of Israel."

Half-Manasseh, a large and fruitful tract, embracing the fertile and well-wooded Bashan, and the densely populated Argob with its walled cities. The natural northern limit of Eastern Manasseh was the snow-crowned Hermon, which sets in its majesty and forms the north boundary of the whole country.

These three tribes having received their possessions on the east side of the Jordan, there remained all the more to be possessed by the other tribes on the western. And considering

the great inequalities of the country, it is wonderful how well Joshua succeeded in apportioning the land so as to satisfy in any measure the various conflicting and eager claims of the tribes. The northern part of Palestine must have been always more fertile and beautiful than the southern: and yet so admirably did he preserve the balance as to cause no complaint to be heard. When there was a deficiency of fertile land, there were solid and manifest advantages adjoined to compensate: and with the single exception of Simeon, it is difficult to see that any tribe fared hardly. The latter tribe was passed over in the first apportionment; but as Judah had more cities than were necessary for one tribe to possess, there were taken from the southern part of Judah eighteen cities, with their adjacent suburbs, and these were made the part of Simeon. These were in two groups, one of thirteen cities, and the other of five, and were none of them important. Beersheba is the one most generally known, but aside from the connection between this place and the patriarchs, it has no prominence in history, and has never possessed any marked advantages. The most of the cities which fell to Simeon lay south of Hebron. They were in all probability not contiguous, at any rate not necessarily so: and this gave Simeon a peculiarity not enviable, namely that it had no compacted territory which it could defend, and in which it could develop a strong tribal feeling. The consequence was that very early Simeon began to lose its importance, and to drop out of sight, and not very late in the Hebrew history disappears altogether, having left its cities and emigrating southward to the mountains of Edom. Its descendants probably exist among the wild and fierce Arabs who now inhabit that rocky and almost inaccessible tract around Petra.

Judah occupied, in general terms, the tract lying between the city of Hebron at the south, and a line drawn westward from the northern end of the Dead Sea, and passing under the south wall of Jerusalem. Thus this great city did not fall within its limits, but was in the domain of Benjamin, the tribe

next north. The territory of Judah, though extensive, can never have rivalled in fertility the more favored regions of the North, although unquestionably far more productive than at the present time. Still the district embraced not the hill-country alone, which though capable of tillage, yet required an incredible amount of labor and perseverance to make it remunerative, but that rich plain at the foot of its western slope, in which lay the cities which Joshua conquered, and whose kings he slew in his first brief and decisive campaign. But Judah was well adapted to train up and keep in constant good condition a tribe which should be dominant. Its soil, not fertile enough to tempt to sluggishness, its climate, bracing and stimulative, its situation, remote from nations whose arts should be imported and bring all kinds of seductive influences with them, and its naturally strong position as a strategic point of defence, all conspired to make it a leading tribe, and to justify the old prophecy that the sceptre should not pass from it till the Promised should come.

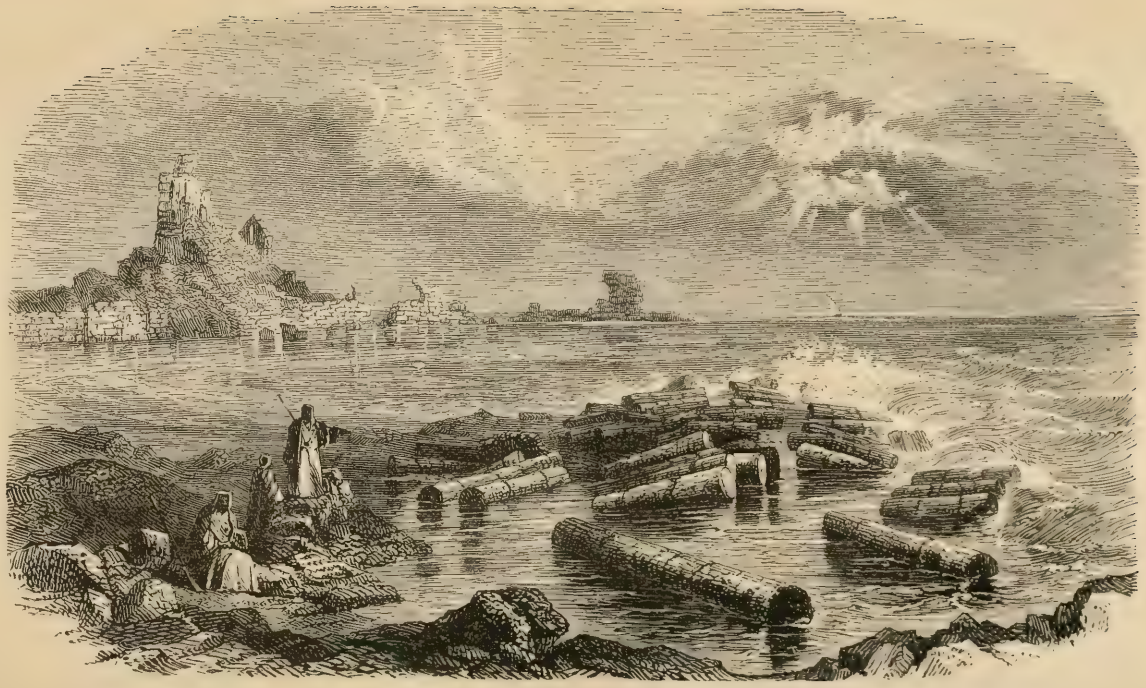
North of Judah lay Benjamin. It was a little tract which this tribe possessed, only about twelve miles from north to south, and twenty-five from east to west. It was moreover singularly barren and destitute of physical advantages, a mere tangle of rocky passes leading from the hill-country eastward down to the Jordan, and westward to the Plain of Sharon. It was just such a tract as would serve as the home of a wild tribe, given to acts of violence, as the tribe of Benjamin was. If we have any notion that these people, because Israelites, were at all akin to the people of Europe or America, in the arts and refinements of civilized life, it were well to dismiss the idea at once. They were very like what the savage Arabs east of the Jordan now are, fierce, warlike, and vindictive. These were a roving, lawless, undisciplined horde, the fear and the scourge of the country, and utterly unlike the gentle Sheikh who was their founder. Yet lying, as their domain did, just at the most defenceless part of the south, and exposed, as it was, to invasion on the east,

up the great wadies leading from the Jericho to the top of the hill-country, it was indispensable to the perpetuation of the Hebrew domination, that just such a tribe should stand on guard at the portal, and be a barrier against wild invaders. One signal advantage was enjoyed by Benjamin, namely, that within its comparatively contracted domain lay some of the most sacred and important places in all the conquered land. Of these, Jerusalem was, of course, the most conspicuous, yet to that great name must be added Mizpeh, Bethel, Kirjath-jearim, Ramah, Gibeon, Gibeah, and Gilgal. This was an offset to the barrenness and diminutiveness of its territory, and we do not hear that the Benjamites ever complained of being hardly dealt with in the distribution of the conquered domain. They appear to have enjoyed the military honors which their position thrust upon them, and to have confined their ambition to the gallant service of resisting attacks, and being always ready for war.

In a little corner of Palestine west of Benjamin, and hemmed in between it and the sea, lay the territory which was originally assigned to Dan. The comparative meagreness of Dan's domain was compensated by its remarkable fertility, for it embraced Cæsarea and that wonderfully fruitful plain of Sharon whose productivity has become a proverb understood throughout the world. Yet the domain of Dan early proved to be too small for that large and energetic tribe, and they were empowered by Joshua to go to the extreme northern limits of Palestine proper and win for themselves a tract just where the western fountain springs of the Jordan burst from the sand. The place is known as Tell el Kadi, or the Hill of Judgment, and is visited with much interest by tourists. It is but a few miles west of Baneas, or Cæsarea Philippi, the eastern springs of the Jordan, and like the latter is remarkable for the suddenness with which the waters which are soon to make a notable river, break and leap from the ground. Here the part of Dan that emigrated from the south took firm root, and gained fresh accessions of population and power, while that part of

the tribe which remained in the tract originally assigned them, became weaker and weaker. The place was, in fact, very much exposed; for close beside them, on a continuation of the same plain indeed, dwelt the powerful Philistines, with whom the Hebrew nation was engaged in interminable war. Thus Dan, dwelling not in the safe hill-country, but on the exposed plain, were constantly at the mercy of their comparatively civilized neighbors on the south, and enjoyed very few of the advantages which their almost incomparable soil would have granted them, could they have preserved a steady, peaceful, agricultural career.

North-east of Dan was the tract assigned to the great and kingly tribe of Ephraim. In that territory which embraced the whole width of West Palestine, there is the transition between the extreme fertility of the North and the extreme barrenness of the South. A part of that could be, perhaps, discernible at the time of the conquest; and in the domain of Ephraim lay some of the loveliest spots in all the land, while, nevertheless, there was much land in its southern part which was hardly superior to Judah or Benjamin's. In Ephraim's demesne lay the sanctuary of Shiloh: and in it, too, was the rich plain of Moreh or Shechem, which was a notable feature in the landscape from Abraham down to the Saviour, and is still one of the fairest tracts in the Holy Land. It is impossible to draw the boundary line which separated Ephraim from West Manasseh: the domain which the two tribes occupied is really incapable of being divided into two different parts, for it is a unit. Still it is easy to make this distinction that while Ephraim occupied the larger part of the block lying between the rocky passes of Benjamin and the fertile plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon, Manasseh's share comprised the gentle slopes, and the genial valleys which lead from Ebal and Gerizim and the adjacent mountain land, northward, and from the natural roadways into the beautiful plain just mentioned. There is little doubt that the northern slopes of Carmel were in the possession of Manasseh: still the two tribes appear to have



CÆSAREA.

had a divided possession of the Carmel ridge which was then doubtless, covered with a heavy growth of wood. That there was a clear intermingling of the territory of the two sons of Joseph is clear from the statement in Josh. xvii., where it is not only stated that the "cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh," but where it is equally clearly intimated that but one lot, or one portion was given to the descendants of Joseph, and that the task was imposed on them both by Joshua, if they wished to increase their domains, to go up into the Carmel range and conquer it for themselves. Of East Manasseh I have already spoken; to it fell the fertile tract in the northern part of Palestine—beyond Jordan, the fertile Bashan, the populous Argob and the great Hauran plain.

Of the other tribes, there need not much be said, for of their special limits we know but little. To Issachar fell, we may say in a word, the extremely fertile plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon, with the exception of a few cities upon it which were given to Manasseh. To Zebulun was assigned the tract immediately north, embracing Nazareth and Cana, and comprising the fertile hills of southern Galilee. It stretched across the western part of the great plain of Jezreel, and touched the Carmel range for some miles. Its northern frontier is quite unknown: its neighbors on this side were Naphtali and Asher, whose domains extended to the very foot of Hermon at the north, and to the great Phœnician cities of Tyre and Sidon on the north-west. These two tribes had a magnificent domain, beautifully uneven, fertile, well-watered and salubrious, but their nearness to their luxurious and craven neighbors on the coast, made them both, and Asher especially, neglectful of their religion, inclined to adopt foreign idolatries, effeminate and corrupt. They very early lost the fine, high tone of their character, and sank into mere servile dependents on the Phœnicians.

One of the most marked geographical landmarks in the region given to the three tribes, Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali is Mt. Tabor, which touched on them all, forming apparently

the northern boundary of Issachar, the south-western limit of Naphtali, and the south-eastern limit of Zebulun. The most of the towns and other landmarks which are given us are quite unknown, and it is in vain that we attempt to decipher the special boundaries of the northern tribes. Further investigation would no doubt bring much information to light, and discover in the present names of villages the biblical appellations of cities. Until that is gained we must wait: yet there is hardly a single important spot in all the land which we can not with certainty ascribe to the tribe that possessed it. In the fertile and beautiful domain of Naphtali, that charming country of hills and plains lying west of the Waters of Merom and the northern portion of the Sea of Galilee, lay Capernaum, the secluded spot which of all, may be called the home of Jesus, Choraszin, Tiberias and Safed, the lofty "city set on a hill" to which Jesus pointed when he taught how conspicuous the true Christian life ought to be among bad men: in Naphtali too was the profuse spring which supplied Banias or Cesarea Philippi with water and made it the garden tract that it has always been. Magdala, too, was then there, waiting to give its name to Mary Magdalene, and there too, overhanging the Waters of Merom was that renowned city of Hazor, whose King Jabin was the most powerful ruler in the whole land at the time of the Hebrew invasion,—the leader of the great northern confederacy which endeavored to strike down the gallant Joshua at a single blow.

There remains but one tribe more to be alluded to: that of Levi, which had no united territory assigned to it: merely forty-eight cities, in which the Levites were to live. To these cities which in round numbers were four to each tribe, were added a ring of land around each city, extending about four thousand feet from the wall, and intended to serve as pasture ground to the cattle. All provisions were taken to prevent this tribe from taking up the pursuits of agriculture, and also to scatter the people of it up and down the whole country, so that men should be always close at hand to discharge the

duties of sacrifice. Six of the forty-eight cities which were given to the Levites, had a double function: for they were also set apart to be Cities of Refuge, *i. e.* places to which persons who had been instrumental in causing the accidental death of a man, might fly and be secure from arrest. This was one of the most merciful provisions in the Hebrew code, and the choice of the six cities was admirably adapted to the ends in view. Three were on the east, and three were on the west side of the Jordan. On the east, one Bezer (its site now unknown) was in the tribe of Reuben: another farther north, Ramoth-Gilead, now Jelad, the second name slightly changed, lies a little north of es Salt, in the mountain district of Gad: another still, Golan, its site like that of Bezer, now unknown, lay within the wild and romantic country of East Manasseh. West of the Jordan were three others, the well-known Hebron in the South, Shechem, scarcely less known, under the shadow of Ebal and Gerizim, in the great central tribe of Ephraim, and Kedesh, now Kades, in the hill-country at the North, a short distance west of Lake Huleh, the Waters of Merom. All of these must have been prominent and accessible cities, easily protected in case of a siege, and affording perfect security to those who fled to them that their sanctity was incapable of being invaded.

The most striking incident connected with the division of the land among the tribes, was the removal of the tabernacle from Gilgal down by the Jordan, up into the heart of the hill-country of Ephraim. Notwithstanding the general survey of the country by the forty who were sent by Moses up from the Wilderness of Wandering, the land was not fully known, in regard to its general extent, the number of its cities, and its minute geographical features. Moses had compassed it in that grand, comprehensive mind of his, and had been able to lay down its larger characteristics and to depict its general outline, with remarkable fidelity: but for the special work of subdividing the country, and apportioning it among the tribes, a much more intimate knowledge of Pales-

tine was needed than either Moses or Joshua, or even Caleb, had been able to gain. The first result of this had been that in the allotment of the district first conquered, that south of the plain of Jezreel, and bordered on the north by the Carmel range, much more land had been given to the tribes of Judah and Ephraim than the limits of the whole country warranted. And this could not be remedied, for the division by lot was irrevocable; all that remained was to carefully survey the remaining district, and apportion it as justly as possible to the seven tribes that remained. Judah and the house of Joseph, and the two and a half tribes on the eastern side of the river remained intact, so far as any encroachment on the general tract given to them was concerned, and the remainder was distributed among the remaining seven tribes with as much justness as possible. And such was the fertility of the north country as compared with the south, that smaller limits than Judah and Ephraim possessed were quite reconcilable with equivalent value.

It was after this mistake, so to call it, of underestimating the whole extent of Palestine, that the tabernacle was removed from Gilgal to Shiloh, and the continuation of the allotment continued. Hardly any place in the whole land was more suitable for a new resting-place for the ark. It was not so eminently striking in its fitness, but it was eminently retired, so much so, indeed, that during all these past ages, when we have known where Bethlehem, and Nazareth, and Shechem, and Hebron, and some other famous localities lay, we have not been able to define the spot so familiar all through the Scriptures as Shiloh. And this in spite of the fact that the sacred historians took special pains to tell us where it was. In the last chapter of the book of Judges we have words as explicit as these: "Shiloh, which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." It would hardly seem possible, that after so complete a description as that, it would be necessary to wait till the year of our Lord,



THE VALLEY AND TOWN OF NABLOUS (ANCIENT SHECHEM.)

From a drawing by William Tipping, Esq.

1838, before an American professor, Dr. Edward Robinson by name, should turn out of his way, on his general journey northward through the country, and discover the site of the ancient religious head-quarters of the Jewish nation. And yet this was the case. Robinson found the ancient name, merely changed into Seilun, still clinging around the hill on which the ruins of Shiloh remain to the present day. Near this hill was the well around which the daughters of Shiloh danced when they were borne away in triumph by the Benjamites, as recorded in the closing chapter of Judges, and around on almost every side are the hills, a little higher than the central one on which the tabernacle once stood, and giving to the place its seclusion. It is almost a natural amphitheatre, and was admirably adapted to its purpose, since it lay almost contiguous to the great road which has always run up and down the hill ridge of Palestine, and yet sufficiently remote from it, to have defied observation down to the very time in which we live.

The slight episode connected with Caleb's inheritance requires a mere casual reference in this work, since all the world knows where Hebron was, and how rich even to the present day are the valleys which lie hard by the famous old city. Caleb showed good taste in his selection, for he could hardly hit upon any limited tract, one which should be better adapted to the wants of a single family than was Hebron and the district adjacent. It was there that that vale of Eshcol lay, whose grapes are as large and bountiful even at the present day: and such are the natural advantages of the soil, that even now, amid all the evils which are incident to a miserable government, while neglect is the ruler, and the old and well-nigh perfect agriculture of an ancient day has left but scanty memorials of what it was, the reason of Caleb's choice can be seen in the quality of the wheat and maize and millet, as well as of the grapes, which are raised in Hebron and its neighborhood.

Besides, there was evidently a touch of romantic adventure

in the mind of old Caleb. He had outlived the years but not the spirit of his youth. He was eighty-five, yet he says in his forcible and simple way, "I am as strong this day, as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war. Now, therefore, give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spoke in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced." The same cause which made Caleb court this possession had drawn thither, long before his day, those tall and powerful men, the primitive tribes of giants, those men whose residence there, as on the east side of the Jordan, antedated the possession by most of the tribes, whose names come into view so frequently in the Old Testament Scriptures. The tract around Hebron was so fertile that that city is expressly declared in the Bible to be one of the most ancient places in the world: and the same cause made the Hittites hold it at the time of Abraham; and subsequently out of the same reason the Anakim or giants gained possession of it; Caleb sought it too for its fruitfulness and its interesting connection with the grapes of Eshcol; and ultimately King David himself chose it for the capital of his kingdom and reigned there for seven years, induced partly no doubt, by the fact that there lay the bones of his ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but also, it is probable, by reason of the same fertility that won the eye of its former possessors.

Near Hebron, a few miles towards the south-west, lay the city of Debir, which Caleb wished to add to his own city of Hebron, or Kirjath-arba, as it had been called before. The site of Debir was pointed out during the middle ages by Felix Fabri, an Italian traveler, who did not visit it personally, but found the name Debir applied by the Arabs to a place south-west of Hebron, where there was said to be an abundance of springs. The spot has been visited of late years, however, by Mr. Rosen and Dean Stanley, and the springs which Achsah counted are now to be plainly seen. The whole family of

Caleb appear to have inherited his adventurous spirit, for it was his own nephew who captured Debir, and it was to his daughter's eager and masculine spirit that he yielded those springs which were worth as much to her future husband, as was the very city of Kirjath-sephir (Debir), which he conquered with his own bold hand.

CHAPTER IX.

TROUBLOUS DAYS—THE JUDGES—DEBORAH.

The Subjugation not Perfect as Yet—Adonibezek—His Cruelties—Some very Strong Cities which had not been Taken—A Touch of Humor—The Five Philistine Cities—Gath not to be found—Who were the Canaanites?—Great Invasion from the East—The First of the Judges—The Second Judge—The Scene Changes to the Jordan—Ehud and Eglon—The Great Battle of Deborah—Description of the Plain of Jezreel—The Battle Painted—Heroism of Deborah—Geographical Localities Visible at the Present Time—The Victory—Reflections.

THE opening chapter of the book of Judges makes very clear that the conquest by Joshua had not brought about that perfect subjugation of the country which was necessary to bring peace to the Israelites. The terror of his name had kept the original inhabitants down so long as he lived; but when the great chieftain had died, and his bones had been laid away in Timnath-serah, to lie almost unnoticed, till the site was discovered a few miles north-west of Jerusalem, by our countryman Dr. Eli Smith, there arose those discords that were inevitable, and it was clear that Palestine was but half subjugated. The first movement was the rebellion of the king of Bezek, a city whose site is not known to us, but which is said in Samuel to have lain between Gibeah and Jabesh. This is perhaps enough for practical purposes, and makes clear that as one journeys north-eastward from Jerusalem, and reaches the eastern limits of the hill-country before going down into the Valley of the Jordan, he passes near the site of this ancient city. The king appears to have been a monster of cruelty, and to have maimed the chiefs whom he captured, by a device which is said to have been

practiced at one time even by the Athenians themselves. The word "kings" which this lord of Bezek is said to have used in summing up his list of brutalities must be taken with a certain measure of reserve, for of true "kings" there were only thirty-one in the whole land of Palestine, as we know from the complete list given us in the narrative of Joshua's exploits. Adonibezek's "kings" were probably chieftains, men who may possibly have had as much influence and power as an Indian chief, but hardly more.

In narrating the list of cities whose inhabitants were not driven out by the Israelites, it is noticeable at a glance that they were among the strongest in all Palestine. Such places as Accho, Sidon, Beth-shean, Dor and the like, were very strong, and it is a fine touch, almost of humor, where the sacred penman says, "but the Canaanites would dwell in that land." It is quite wonderful indeed, that after Joshua had died, the primitive inhabitants were so far held in subjection as to pay tribute to their conquerors. No solution for this exists, so far as I know, but one which recognizes a direct upholding of the Jews by a divine hand. According to all human ways of judging and of speaking, the conquerors were much the feebler and less civilized people: and yet even when there was no chieftain like Joshua in command, there was in them that degree of fire, and power and sturdiness, and above all of faith in the Hebrew God, that energized them up to the point of being able to maintain the results of the conquest, at least creditably. Indeed, to a certain extent they went on with the work of overcoming those whom Joshua had not subdued, and took the two powerful Philistine cities, Gaza and Ashkelon, close by the sea-coast, and in the fertile plain at the foot of the Judean hills. Yet their results were limited in this direction, for armed as were their enemies in that fruitful tract, with chariots of war, it was quite impossible for the Israelites to meet them on equal terms with their rude spears. Indeed Dan, whose allotment had been the northern extremity of the plain, or "valley" as it is called in the books of Joshua



'AKKA OR ACCO—ANCIENT ACCHO OR PTOLEMAIS.

The Canaanites were never expelled from this city. Here the Apostle Paul sojourned at the house of Philip.

and Judges, was unable to hold its own, and was driven by the rude and hard-handed Amorites out from their domain, and compelled to find such lodgment as might be had in the hill-country of Ephraim at the north. Yet the power of the latter tribe, joined to that of the flying Danites, was equal to the task of successfully encountering the victors on the plain, at least so far as if not to reduce them to absolute subjection, to compel them to pay tribute.

The Scripture narrative is very explicit in giving us the names of the tribes which were not brought into absolute subjection, and nothing can be more true to what we should expect to find, than is the statement of lands still unsubdued. First Philistia, or the great maritime plain south of Dan and west of Judah; held by five kings, and belonging to their five important cities, Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekrom. It was a rich tract, and the people who held it, though of a somewhat sluggish temperament, were tolerably well advanced in the arts and refinements of civilization. Though there was no sea-coast capable of being turned to large commercial uses, still Gaza and Ashkelon had, like Athens, their harbors, and maintained some relations with foreign lands. Nearly all these cities are to be seen even at the present day, either in the form of extensive ruins, as Ashkelon, or as a thriving town, as Gaza. Gath alone is not to be found, although Porter and some other recent travelers think that they have discovered its site, in an important strategic position, near the base of the Judean hills. The name of Gath has disappeared, but the names of the other old Philistine cities remain almost unchanged in sound, down to the present day. The nation has, however, passed away, and the Syrians who now inhabit the Philistine plain, have very little in common with the people whom the Israelites found it so difficult, and well-nigh impossible to subdue. Indeed, so strong were they in their chariots, and walled cities, and advanced customs of civilization, that the Hebrews could do little more than imitate them. Shamgar, that notable judge, who slew six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad,

wrought no real deliverance for his countrymen. It was a great feat, and worthy of commemoration, and yet the story which it mainly tells is the entire want of resources in the command of the Israelites, to do anything permanent and effective in bringing such a powerful nation as the Philistines into subjection.

By the Canaanites, who are alluded to in the third chapter of Judges, as being unsubdued, are meant, in all probability, the dwellers along the Mediterranean shore near Mount Carmel and northward. The whole country was known as Canaan, yet the name Canaanites was applied only to that portion of the primitive tribes which lived by the sea-shore or on the banks of the Jordan. They were what would be called in Scotland the "lowlanders," while the Amorites and the Perizzites were "highlanders." The Canaanites were to a certain extent a trading folk, and it is probable had some slight foreign commerce; hence they were more powerful than the wild Amorites and Perizzites who lived up among the hills, and whereas the latter and the other hill tribes were easily subdued, the Canaanites were not brought under the sway of the invaders. Nō more were the people of powerful Sidon away to the north, on the Mediterranean and on the extreme western edge of the Lebanon slope, a very strong position, "careless and secure," and evidently impregnable to a rude and savage horde like the Israelites. Add to this the tract in the possession of the northern branch of the Hivites, the fertile Cœle-Syrian valley, that extremely fertile and well-watered and well-defended tract lying between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon chains, and extending from Hermon and the sources of the Jordan away northward as far as to the "entering in of Hamath," the narrow gorge through which the Orontes still breaks and foams as of old, and where stands, even at the present day, and with name but slightly changed, the old Bible city of Hamath. Porter has visited it and described it graphically in his interesting works on Palestine.

All this territory had been promised to the tribes by Moses,

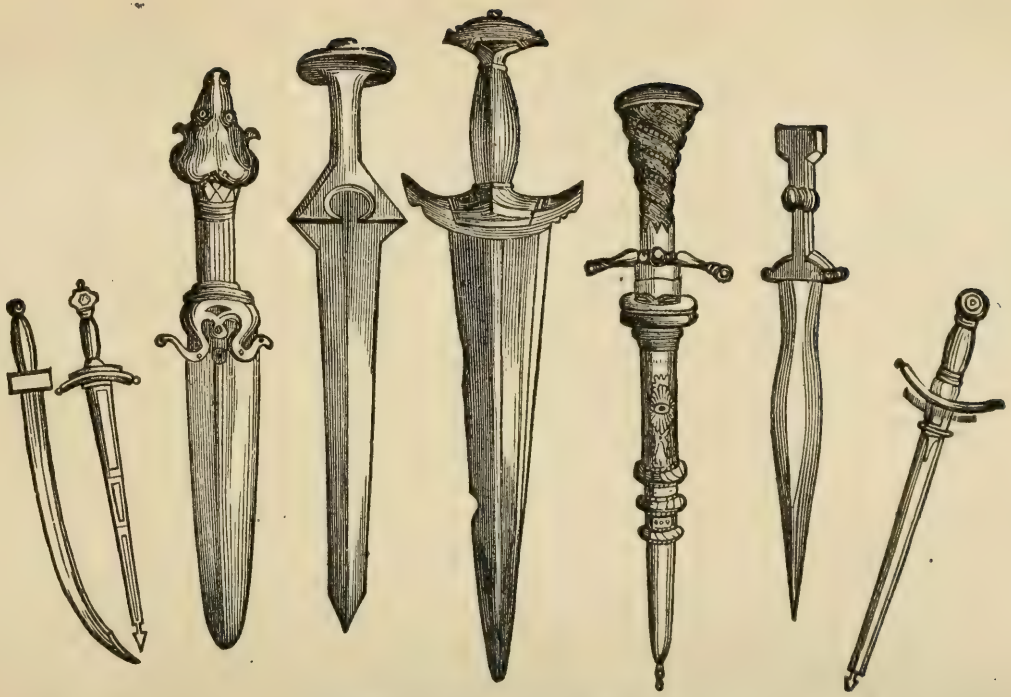
but the time when it could be reckoned as belonging to Israel had not then come. At any rate, the nation was unequal to the task of conquering it under the reign of the violent, undisciplined "judges." It embraced, as the reader will see, some of the very finest districts in the whole country; the Philistine plain, a part of the Sharon plain, its continuation northward, the coast north of Carmel, the western slope of the Lebanon range, and the beautiful and fertile valley between the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon ranges.

The first invasion which troubled the Israelites was from the same general region whence had come those four kings who came from the Euphrates in the time of Abraham, and waged war upon the five cities of the plain. The Euphrates' banks and the borders of the Tigris have been from the very morning of the world, the prolific mother of nations. Early in the Bible, indeed in connection with the story of the creation, we have those two rivers mentioned; and it is but typical of all that was to follow. Mesopotamia has been a kind of a nursing mother to the East. And the conquest of Canaan was hardly past, and the people had just settled down to the quiet possession of the land, when a strong king swept down from the district east of the Euphrates, as if in anticipation of the Assyrian and Babylonish invaders who were afterwards to come, and overran the land, and compelled the Hebrews to pay tribute to him and pass into the same subordinate relations to him, which the conquered tribes maintained towards their conquerors. This called out the first achievements which make an individual's name prominent, subsequently to Caleb's and Othniel's achievements in the South. And this first judge, who gained a victory over Cushan-rishathaim, and drove him back from Palestine to Mesopotamia, was the very Othniel, Caleb's nephew, who had in his youth showed that he was worthy to be a son-in-law to the old chieftain, as well as to have, as his nephew, Caleb's family blood in his veins.

The next judge's career takes us down to the neighborhood of Gilgal, and revives the recollections of the Israelites' pas-

sage of the Jordan, the taking of Jericho, and the establishment of the camp at Gilgal. The Moabites, who when the Israelites passed through their land, had been driven into the south part of their country, that is, into the region east of the Dead Sea, had now rallied, crossed the river and had taken possession of the west bank of the Jordan. Eglon, the king, had built him a summer palace not far from the site of Jericho, and was living there in some state. The story of his assassination by Ehud is told so graphically in the Bible, as to need almost no elucidation. The only geographical point which may profitably be allowed to it is the verisimilitude, which raises up Ehud a Benjamite, one of the very tribe on whose territory he was living, to be the instrument of his death. It appears that the Moabites had crossed the river at that very spot where the Jordan is passed now every summer: only it was not the spring time, when the river is a roaring and turbulent flood, but the summer time, when it is a small and quiet stream. The Moabites had called in allies, the Ammonites, descendants of one of Lot's daughters, living in the country held by the tribe of Gad, and the fierce Amalekites, whose home, so far as they had any, was on the southern confines of Palestine. The slaughter of the Moabites, after Eglon's assassination, took place close by the Jordan ford, not many miles distant from its mouth.

The geographical elucidation of the first great decisive battle which the Israelites were compelled to fight, is easy. This was the grand encounter in which the gallant and heroic-hearted Deborah, a woman of the hill-country of Ephraim, headed the Hebrew host, having Barak, a man of Naphtali, as her right arm. The scene of that encounter was the rich and beautiful plain of Esdraelon, the Jezreel of the Bible. With our present accurate knowledge of that tract, we can follow the whole course of the battle. We see the forces of Jabin, the northern king, under the command of his lieutenant Sisera, come down from Hermon and the rich coast of the Waters of Merom, and take up their post on the southern lim-



ANCIENT SWORDS AND DAGGERS.

To illustrate the assassination of Eglon by Ehud which was accomplished by a dagger.

its of the plain of Esdraelon, the place where stood then the city of Taanach, and where stands now the village of Taanak, wearing the ancient name almost unchanged. The distance across the plain is about twelve miles, from the place where Sisera's army was drawn up, with its nine hundred iron chariots, for battle, to the slopes of Tabor, on which beautiful mountain, were Barak and Deborah, and ten thousand eager men. These had come together from the hills of Naphtali, in the north, the district in which lay Hazar, the capital of the enemy, for since the time when Joshua gained his second splendid victory, the Hazar which he burned had been rebuilt, and the Jabin whom he overthrew and put to the sword had been followed by another prince of the same name, and no less powerful and energetic than had been his ancestor. The home of Barak was at Kedesh, a short distance south, in all probability of Hazar, though, as has already been remarked in this work, it is impossible to point out with certainty, the place where Hazar stood. Kedesh is, however, well known: it bears the old name, only changed into Kades, and is at the western margin of the rich plain which borders Lake Huleh, the Waters of Merom, on the west. The Israelite army was made up chiefly of warriors from the northern tribes of Naphtali, and Zebulon, directly south of it: yet Issachar, which filled the plain, and West Manasseh, and Ephraim, gave not only the great leader, Deborah, and some of the commanding princes, but a not inconsiderable number of soldiers. Asher, lying on the western slope of the hills of Galilee, and on the sea-coast north of Carmel, felt that it had little at stake in the contest, and so ingloriously stayed away from the field, while Dan, Judah, and Simeon at the South, were so far removed from the scene of action, as to make no appearance on the eventful day of the great battle.

Imagine the scene. Here lies, on the northern edge of the plain, the beautiful, cone-like Tabor, and on its sides are gathered the ten thousand bold men under the command of Barak. At the summit, Deborah, the real leader and hero

of the day, is scanning with her scorching, impassioned glance, the whole plain. Southward, at the distance of twelve or thirteen miles, lies the low, bare range, which at its western extremity, where it overlooks the sea, bears the well-known name of Carmel, but which at that point was called the mountains of Megiddo, from a little city thus designated, at the base of their northern slope. Near Megiddo was the city of Taanach. Both of the places had never been fairly subdued; they were still in the hands of the Canaanites, as well as the other important points in the valley of Jezreel. Between Megiddo and Taanach, Deborah's eye discerns the crowded hosts of Sisera, with their hundreds of chariots. It was, of course, that these might come into play that the Canaanites had chosen this spot. Elsewhere they might be at the mercy of the impetuous Hebrews, but here, they might well count themselves certain of the day. Flowing between the two armies, Deborah could see the waters of the Kishon, slowly winding its extremely tortuous way through the rich, black soil of the plain. It is a torrent after heavy winter rains, but near Megiddo, it must have ordinarily been, what it is now, almost a dry water-course. Across it, it would be easy for an army to pass. Near Megiddo, indeed it seems to have gathered in little pools, and so to have given rise to an expression, otherwise unintelligible, the "waters of Megiddo," but the stream itself was quite insignificant. The plan of the attack was for the Hebrew host to dart down the mountain side, sweep across the plain, and without weapons, for they were almost defenceless, to turn the horses upon the very host that used them, and so to transform the chariots into engines of wholesale destruction among the Canaanites themselves. The well known war cry of the Israelites would have been very effective in doing this, and at the same time in striking terror into the hearts of their enemies. The plan was carried into effect, and had a wonderfully efficient ally in a violent storm of hail and rain that came up from the east, benumbing the Canaanites, and causing them to become an

easy prey. The storm which effected such results, did the Israelites a no less signal service in flooding the Kishon, and converting the whole district into a morass, in which the horses and the men wallowed and perished. The Hebrew victory was complete. Sisera leaped from his chariot and escaped to the hills which bound Esdraelon on the north, his hope being to fly to Harosheth, his home. But tarrying at a Bedouin village on the way, he was betrayed in a manner which is inconsistent with any principles of Arab honor now, and which was equally so then; and which can only be defended by recourse to a line of reasoning which made the late American war a righteous one, and which, therefore, throws upon God the responsibility for all acts of cruelty which in the course of his Providence are sure to be instrumental in ushering in the events which He plainly ordains.

CHAPTER X.

GIDEON AND HIS GREAT DELIVERANCE.

A Difficult Theme—Some Localities Unknown—Who were the Midianite Invaders?—The Bedouin of That Day—Their Costume and Manners—Where They Crossed the Jordan—The Plain of Esdraelon—Its Physical Conformation—The Order of the Midianite Invasion—Who Entered into the Alliance Against Them—The Character of Gideon—His Call as a Deliverer—His Brothers—The "Spring of Trembling"—The Sifting of His Men—How he got rid of the Cowards—The Night Attack—The Victory—The Pursuit into the High Lands East of the Jordan—Death of the "Raven" and the "Wolf"—Change in Gideon's Character.



E advance in our efforts to localize the scenes of the Judges, to the great and splendid transactions in which Gideon, the greatest of them all, was the chief figure. It is impossible to portray the theater of his exploits with the perfect fidelity with which we can present the battle-field in which Barak and Deborah won such a brilliant success. Still although we do not know where some of the minor localities were, with which were connected the career of Gideon, we have enough to make perfectly clear, the whole course and conduct of his memorable campaign. The Midianites who invaded Palestine subsequently to Deborah's day, occupied in a general sense, the whole country east and south-east of the Jordan, as far as any population extended. Their true home was east of the Sinaitic peninsula, in Arabia proper, but they were a wandering race, and often overran and held temporary possession of the tract east of the Jordan, subjecting to their sway the tribes whose true home was there. At the time of Gideon this was the case; and they had strengthened themselves by forming an alliance with the fierce

and savage Amalekites, whose true home was on the southern margin of Palestine. We must not imagine that these tribes were at all different from the Bedouins of the present day. They were in fact the same Arabs whom we now encounter east of the Jordan; and the very names of the Midianite princes Oreb and Zeeb, the Wolf and the Raven, are in striking analogy with the present fierce chieftain east of the Jordan, who bears the name of the Leopard. And besides the names, the very dress and ornaments described in the book of Judges, are exactly those which the Arabs wear at the present day, especially those who drift up thither from the more sunny and fertile regions of Arabia. The bright, gay robes which the Midianite princes wore, and their ear-rings and bracelets and nose-rings of gold, are just what Arab chieftains love now: and no better picture of Arab manners, bravery, fortitude, and desolating warfare could be given in our time, than this in the Bible, which pictures the Arabs so many generations before Christ.

They crossed the Jordan at some of the fords near the eastern edge of the plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon. That fertile tract has always been the prize first aimed at by invading hordes from the east side of the Jordan, and the great reason why it is not a perfect garden at the present time, is because no sooner is the harvest-time almost come, than a swarm of fierce Bedouins from beyond the river, come in and overcome the cultivators of the soil, and carry away the new harvest. One of the first advantages which would accrue from a reformed government in Syria, would be the giving security to the people who till the fertile lands of that country, to harvest their grain. And nowhere would this gain be more quickly or more generally felt than in Esdraelon, for there is where the exposure is the greatest.

The reader will bear in mind that this plain extends in effect from the Mediterranean to the Jordan: not in its full width indeed, but still in a contracted form. South of Tabor there is a kind of isthmus of plain, so to speak, lying between

that graceful mountain and Jebel Duhy, or Little Hermon (the Hill of Moreh apparently, in the biblical account of Gideon). South of this mountain, too, there is still another isthmus, lying between it and the low Gilboa ridge. These two isthmuses, if I may apply that term to land that lies between mountains, are but eastern tongues or arms of the plain of Jezreel. A railway might run from the Mediterranean to the Jordan without difficulty, although the plain reaches a height of about five hundred feet at the point where it contracts into the tongues which form its eastern portion. By understanding this region, we gain the best insight into the operations of Gideon, and can easily follow him through his rapid and decisive campaign. The event which was exhibited in connection with Deborah was a less splendid achievement than the series of Gideon's victories, and although in a certain colossal massiveness and strength, Deborah has no equal in the Bible history, still in the combination of qualities which make up a great hero, Gideon was conspicuously her superior. In Deborah we have clearly the inspiration of a heroine: there is a certain afflatus which supplies the place of those cool and practical features which ought to be found in a great soldier. In Gideon there is less of the prophetic fire and force than in Deborah; but there is greater military skill even than Joshua exhibits.

The Midianites had crossed the Jordan, flooded the plain of Jezreel, poured over the hills of West Manasseh and Ephraim, and had even traversed the Philistine plain, and consumed every product of the earth as far even as Gaza. The whole number was very great, about one hundred and thirty-five thousand. To the eye of the Israelites this was a mighty host, and the language which describes these Arab savages, and the space occupied by their slumbering camels, is hardly to be called hyperbolical. They apparently so completely overawed the tribe of Issachar, whose home was on the plain of Jezreel, that they were unable to assist at all in expelling the foreigners from the land. Just as in the deliverance



JEZREEL.

Nothing remains of the princely capital of Ahab but the Spring which supplied it with water. Near here was Naboth's vineyard which King Ahab coveted; and his wife Jezebel, by a fraud, caused Naboth to be stoned, when Ahab took possession of the vineyard, by which a curse was brought on Ahab, Jezebel and all their house.

under Borak and Deborah, the tribes which enlisted most heartily in the work of achieving independence, were those which lived in the immediate neighborhood, so in this case Manasseh, Naphtali, and Zebulon, are the most eager. Asher on the north-western hills, and also on the very coast line of the great plain, came to the rescue now, although she had not done so when Jabin had attacked Israel. Ephraim came into the alliance, but not promptly. Gideon was himself a Manassite, but just where his native town of Ophrah lay, we do not know. I have already alluded to the great qualities which distinguished Gideon. A great soldier of our time might study his character with profit. He had the same qualities which make generals both victorious and famous, caution, decision, acuteness, rapidity of movement, and courage. There is not a step that he takes which is not deliberation itself, and yet when the campaign opens, he sweeps on with resistless speed and energy. Those acts of his which are commonly passed over unreflectively in reading the Bible narrative, are full of instruction respecting the nature of the man. Notice how slow he is to accept his call to the chief command: how he turns it and turns it, to see that there is no mistake. Distrustful of the comparatively humble place which his family holds in Israel, and even in his own tribe, he is not content with a simple intimation that he is wanted, but must prove the truth so to speak, out of the very mouth of the angel. The narrative incidentally lets much light fall upon the manners of the time. We see in Gideon's threshing of the wheat, in order to hide it from the Midianites, how thoroughly fear-stricken was the whole land; while in the introduction of Baal worship by Gideon's father, we learn how far the old Jehovah worship had yielded to the false and blasphemous rites of the primitive Canaanites. But convinced at length that he is called to a high and solemn mission, he takes command of the armies of Israel. His own brothers, men of princely bearing, as was Gideon himself, had been slain by the Midianites on the sides of Tabor, and no doubt this inhuman butchery had its influ-

ence in hurrying on the newly appointed general. The main body gathered at the eastern part of the plain of Jezreel, in the defile between the Gilboa range and the solitary peak of little Hermon, the hill of Moreh, as it is called in the Scriptural narrative. Near the base of the former heights was a spring, to be seen at the present day, where Gideon was to sift his army, and reserve only those on whom he might implicitly rely. His trial of them by watching them drink, was exceedingly shrewd, and indicates his thorough knowledge of men. Those who in their great thirst buried their mouths in the water of the spring, Gideon rejected as too precipitate, and did not dare to trust them as soldiers, but he reserved as fully trustworthy those who took up the water with their fingers in a deliberate and orderly fashion. The causing the cowards to withdraw from the scene of battle, after due proclamation, was in accordance with the old custom of the nation. This proclamation, "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead, (Gilboa,") reduced the number from twenty-two thousand to ten thousand. The trial at the well, (or spring) of Harod, diminished the number down to three hundred. God seems able to effect more by a few resolute and valiant ones, than by a host of the timid and hasty, and undisciplined.

After all was ready for the battle, Gideon with his three hundred wound down the pass between the hill of Moreh, (little Hermon, Jebel Duhy), on the north, and the mountains of Gilboa on the south. It was a tongue, as I have elsewhere showed, of the plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon, and led directly down to the Jordan. In the valley of this river was the vast Midianite camp. Before making the attack, which was to be done in the night, while the enemy lay and slept, Gideon crept down among the tents of the sleepers, to spy into the position and learn the best mode of attack. He accidentally passed near an Arab who was telling his dream: how a thin cake of barley bread rolled into the Midianite camp, and overturned his tent. His companion answered, this is nothing but the

sword of Gideon. The answer convinced the unseen Israelite leader that there was a wholesome fear of his name among his enemies, and toned him up to just the spirit requisite for a bold stroke. For a bold stroke it unquestionably was: a question of life or death to the attacking party; one in which the chances were enormously unequal. On the one side were three hundred men; on the other, one hundred and thirty-five thousand. The Midianites were probably the best equipped, but the Israelites were desperate. The device of hiding the torches in pitchers might have been seen till very lately in the streets of Cairo, where until a few years ago, it was the custom for the night police to patrol the streets with torches thrust into pitchers, from which they drew them whenever it was necessary. The strategy employed by Gideon was triumphantly successful. The sound of the cow horns blown by the Israelites in the darkness of the night, the glare of the torches, the shouting of the Hebrew warriors, always a terrible sound, but now especially so, as they raised their deafening war-cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," completely bewildered the Arab hordes: they sprang up suddenly, their camels were doubtless terrified and carried death wherever they ran, the men turned against each other, and of the whole number but fifteen thousand escaped, while one hundred and twenty thousand fell at one anothers' hands.

This ended the battle, but the remaining troops of the enemy fled towards the northern fords of the Jordan. Gideon had however anticipated them, and had ordered the Ephraimites, east of whose territory lay the fords of Beth-bara, to come down and intercept the retreating foe. Here another rout took place; the Ephraimites captured two Arab sheiks, Oreb and Zeeb, the Raven and the Wolf, and put them to death, the former on a rack, and the latter on a wine-press, which thenceforth bore their respective names. Meantime the remnant of the Midianites had crossed the Jordan at the fords of Succoth, a little further south, and thence plunged up the valley of the Jabbok into the mountains of Gilead, passing on

their way the tower of Penuel, the site of Jacob's victorious wrestling. Still eastward, into the very fastnesses of the Gilead range, the Arabs pursued their hurried retreat, while Gideon followed, "faint, yet pursuing." The third battle took place near Karkor, a place now unknown, but unquestionably one of those rock strongholds, where an army might hold a large number at bay, but where the Midianites were signally unable to resist the flushed and eager conquerors. The two kings were taken and slain: and thus that invasion, one of the most formidable that could occur, was brought to an end. Gideon was urged to assume kingly power, but like Cromwell, he refused the name, while he was willing to accept the state of a king. As with Solomon, his great successes wrought mischief in his character: he became voluptuous and profligate; and in the Gideon to whom the gold earrings, and collars and chains, and purple raiment, taken from the enemy, became a snare, we have few traces of the brave and able general, to whose great skill and trustful loyalty to God, his nation was indebted for a grand deliverance.

There is no question that this victory over the Midianites at once took its place, as an event of transcendent moment in the history of the Israelites. David refers to it with great enthusiasm, in connection with the conquest of Sihon and Og, the passage of the Red Sea, and the victory of Deborah over Sisera.

CHAPTER XI.

ABIMELECH THE TYRANT AND JEPHTHAH THE FREEBOOTER.

A Tragic Tale—The Fertile Vale of Shechem—Its Conformation and Ancient Landmarks — The Scene of Jotham's Parable — Other Important Sites — Jephthah's Home East of the Jordan—A Wild, Rugged Character—How Jephthah Resembles Elijah—The Wildest of the Arabs—The First Movement of the Freebooter—The Territory of Ammon—The Crisis for which Jephthah was Raised Up—The Brief Campaign Against the Ammonites—The Scene of the World-famous Vow—The Daughter's Fate.

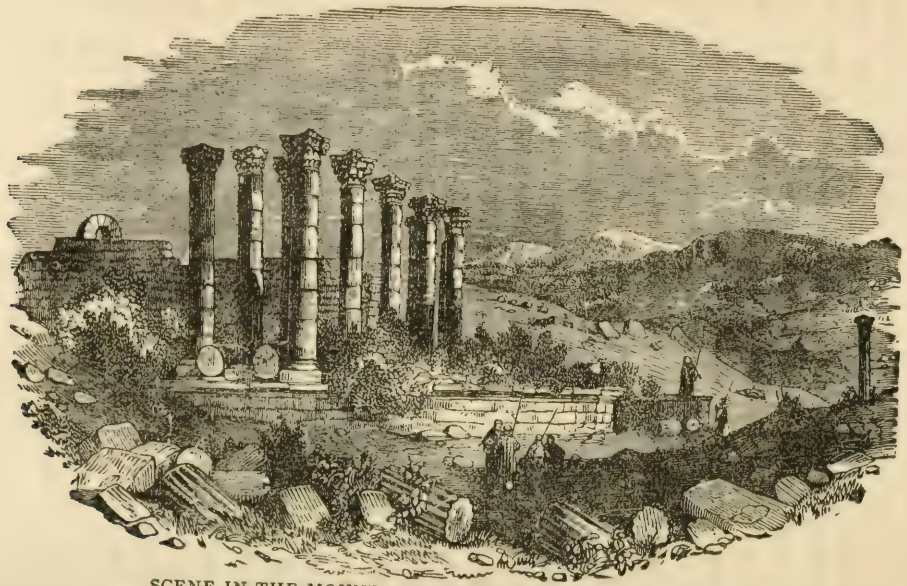
THE tragic story of Abimelech transfers us to a familiar spot, the same beautiful and fertile vale of Shechem which attracted our attention first in the story of Abraham, and then in the career of Jacob. It seems probable that the city of Shechem had attained no inconsiderable prominence among the other large towns of Palestine: but in the lifetime of Abimelech it assumed at once the state and name of a capital. The reader is probably quite familiar with the general aspect of the vale of Shechem, still the story of Abimelech will not be quite intelligible without looking over the landscape in which it was enacted. Between the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, the valley is narrow, in some places but a few hundred feet wide, and near the western extremity of this lovely vale, lies the comparatively modern city of Nablous, the continuation of the Sychar of Jesus' time. The ancient Shechem and the well of Jacob near it, were about two miles further east, near the eastern roots of Gerizim. Here the valley has begun to tunnel out and curve around towards the south, to merge into the extremely beautiful plain known at the present time as El Mukhna. From one extremity of this larger plain, which is integrally one with the nar-

row vale of Shechem, to the other, is a distance of about seven miles. The whole tract is delightful, but growingly so as one approaches the two sacred mountains of Ebal and Gerizim. Over the hills which skirt the northern edge of the plain can be seen the grand snowy top of Hermon, eighty miles away, and towering more than ten thousand feet above the ocean level. The vale is well-watered: springs and brooks may be seen at every turn, and even the air is filled with the exhalations from so abundant supplies. The spot is not only the most beautiful in Central Palestine, but the only beautiful one. The vale of Shechem is still well furnished with all the growths which give coloring and point to the parable of Jotham. The thick mass of corn which waves over the whole valley, is dotted to-day with picturesque olive trees, while around the white houses of Nablous may be seen the fig tree, laden with its good fruit. Interlacing these, may be descried the festoons of the vine, while on the sides of Ebal and Gerizim still grows the bramble, useless except to be gathered and burned: from it coming in our time the same hot and devouring flame which Jotham ascribed to it in that early day. Towering over the plain, on the south, are the precipitous sides of Gerizim, and those projecting spurs of rock on one of which Jotham appeared and narrated his striking and beautiful parable. In the immediate neighborhood of this spot were the other places which are connected with the story of Abimelech, Mount Zalmon, where he procured the boughs which were used in burning the tower of Shechem, and Arumah, the city which Abimelech chose for his residence, but we are not able to identify them with certainty. Thebez, the place where he was killed, has been discovered. It bears its ancient name, slightly changed, and is on the road from Nablous to Beisan, the ancient Beth-shean, near the scene of Gideon's first and second victories.

The reader of the Bible who is endeavoring to set its pictures before himself in a geographical light, is called in following the story of Jephthah, to the district east of the

Jordan, exclusively. It is interesting to mark how we are compelled to note, as we go on in our development of our subject, the various districts of Palestine, to enter into them in detail, and so to work the whole field up in its various parts, till at last we shall find that we are completely in mastery of it. We have had occasion on previous pages to study Eastern Palestine and to become, to a certain extent, familiar with it; but we must go over it again in tracing the destiny of the immortal freebooter, Jephthah. He was a native of the mountains of Gilead, the same wild district which gave birth to Elijah, and imparted to him some of that roughness which is so conspicuous a trait in his character. But far more rough and wild than Elijah, was Jephthah. And it is a fact that has been too much overlooked, that the fierce qualities which appear in him, are largely to be accounted for on the ground of his transjordanic origin. At the present day all travelers in Palestine know that the Arabs on the east side of the river are far more wild and savage than those on the west side. It is extremely dangerous to travel on the east side of the Jordan, even in our time; and there is little room for believing that the tribe of Gad was much more gentle than are the Bedouins of the present day. Because they were Hebrews, and had the rudiments of a true worship, we must not forget that in matters of feeling, and sentiment, and culture, they were not much above the level of savages.

The first movement of Jephthah was his flight out of the true range of Gilead, on the east bank of the Jordan, into the land of Tob, whose location we do not know, but which it is safe to infer, lay in the eastern part of the mountainous country. The territory of Ammon was in a general sense what lay north and north-east of the torrent stream, the Jabbok; unlike Moab, which had regularly defined limits, Ammon had none, but being the possession of a most warlike and nomadic race, it faded away indefinitely on the side towards the desert. A most formidable race of savages were these Ammonites, the descendants of Lot by his incest with one of



SCENE IN THE MOUNTAINS OF GILEAD—RUINS OF JERASH.'
The pillars are of Roman origin, but the scene is one of affecting desolation and beauty.

his daughters, and when they came into conflict with the Israelites, the event was one of course which demanded a first-rate leader, and tried and valiant men. At just this juncture, Jephthah was raised up to meet the crisis. Sprung as he was from an irregular connection, and having a harlot for his mother, his whole life was spent in the wild deeds of a freebooter. His own half-brothers drove him forth: and he led his marauding career in the eastern part of the Gilead range. It was in that district that he was living, when his clansmen needed his vigorous and efficient services. The occasion of the war was the claim of the Ammonites to the territory east of the Jordan, which the Israelites occupied by the right of conquest. It was, of course, impossible to come to an understanding, and both armies appealed respectively to the decision of arms, and of the gods in which they respectively believed. Jephthah was put at the head of the Israelites on the single condition that, if he should be victorious, he should be set over his tribe. It was granted, and the campaign began. The vow which has made Jephthah's name a household word, I need not allude to. The course of his victorious march is not given with any minuteness of detail, but enough is recorded to enable us to follow him with tolerable precision. He passed eastward at the head of his bands, to the old watch tower of Mizpeh, which commemorated Jacob's parting from Laban, and which was erected on one of the most eastern of all the Gilead hills. Thence he bore southward into the heart of the Ammonite country, destroying twenty cities of the enemy, and bringing desolation as far towards the south as Aroer, which was almost unquestionably on the banks of the Arnon. The precise location of Minnith and the "valley of the vineyards," is unknown to us. But enough is given to make it clear that he swept through a wide tract, the whole land unquestionably over which the Ammonites had any control, and brought them into absolute subjection, and inflicted upon them very severe slaughter. And "thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel."

There is nothing further in the story of Jephthah which requires geographical elucidation. The mountains over which his daughter wandered for two months, bewailing the hardest fate that could befall a Hebrew maiden, that her name and family should perish in her, are unquestionably the rocky hills of Gilead, amid which Jephthah and his tribe lived, and which were filled with quiet and sheltered nooks where a young girl might be alone or with a few companions, and deplore her coming fate. The fords which the Gileadites intercepted, and where they subjected the Ephraimites to the trial of pronouncing the word Shibboleth, were the well-known place of crossing near the mouth of the Jabbok, which has often come under our view, and which did so last in connection with the fiery and gallant Gideon.

CHAPTER XII.

SAMSON THE GREAT HUMORIST.

Scene Transferred to the Hill-Country of Dan—Samson a Danite—Character of the Country where he was Reared—The Philistines and their Domain—Whence They Came—How They Surpassed the Israelites in Arts—The Gradual Increase of the Philistines' Power—Their Use of Horses and Chariots—The Rudeness of the Arts of War Among the Israelites—The Name Palestine Derived from Philistine—The Chief Cities—Their Ruins at the Present Day—Ashkelon, Ekron, Ashdod—The Physical Character of the Philistine Territory.

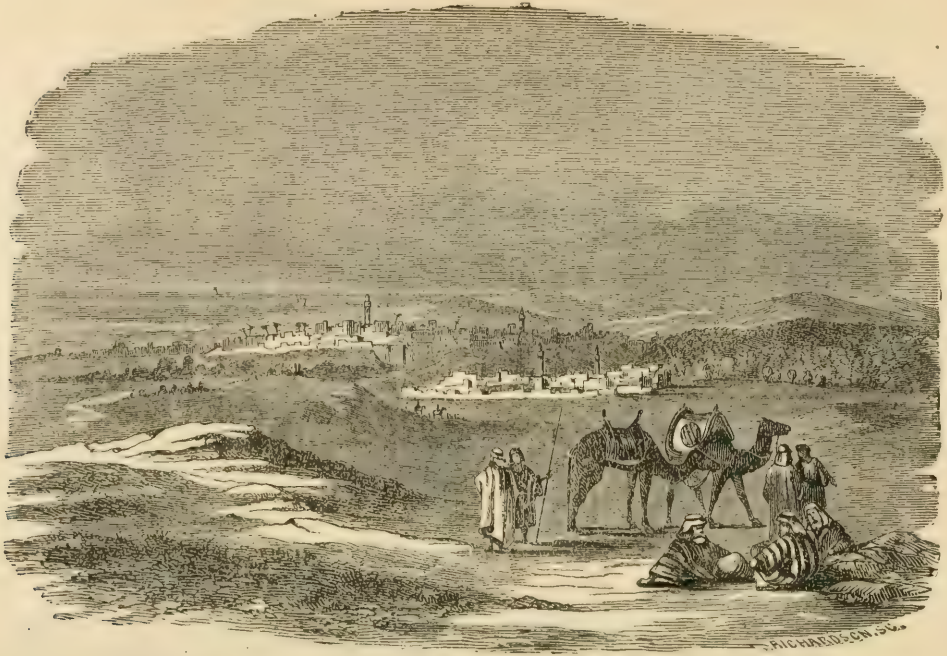
IN dealing with the interesting story of Samson, we are transferred to a district with which we have thus far had little to do: namely the hill-country of Dan, and the extensive and fruitful Philistine plain. I have indeed in a general way, alluded to the territory allotted to Dan: but there has not come before us till now, any necessity for speaking of that tribe and its domain, with any detail. Samson was, however, a Danite: and the whole story of his career carries us to that limited territory shut in between the hills held by Ephraim and Judah, and the "low country," or Shefelah, lying along by the sea. It was a tiny tract, and one of the episodes which follow the story of Samson, relates to the emigration of a considerable number of families of the tribe of Dan, which went far to the north and secured new territory there. As one goes down from Jerusalem to the port of Joppa, he passes through the hills and valleys, which at the time of allotment, were given to Dan: hills and valleys of no special fruitfulness, and not eminent in any way by reason of natural attractions. It was in the village of Zorah on one of these hills, that Samson was born, and the village

of Timnath, the home of his wife, lay down in the valley to the south-westward. Both of the places are now marked by unimportant villages which bear in slightly changed form, the ancient names.

The Philistines occupied the plain from Joppa on the north, to Gaza on the south. The race was an immigrant one. They were "strangers" as their name itself implies, and from all the information we can gather, slight enough indeed, yet so far as it goes, trustworthy, they came from the island of Crete, which was almost in sight from the northern part of Palestine, and from the shores of Asia Minor. The Scriptures specify another tribe, bearing the name of Avites or Avims, as occupying Philistia in the old, patriarchal times: but these had faded away, and been supplanted by the Philistines. During the lifetime of Joshua, the latter do not appear to have been or seemed formidable. We get no hint of their rising and dangerous power till we come to the time of the Judges, when they were evidently a troublesome race. In arts they appear to have been a long way in advance of the Israelites, but in cunning and quickness, to have been far behind them. In all matters of warfare they had an immense advantage, for living as they did on the sea-side plain, they were able to use horses and chariots more effectively than was possible in any other part of Palestine. It is in this thing that we find the key to the long protracted wars between the Israelites and Philistines. They each lived in a different element, so to speak: one nation in the hill-country, the other on the plain; and so in battle they were almost as much removed from each other, and as little able to come into effective collision, as is a regiment of infantry with a man-of-war. The Israelites were unquestionably most rudely equipped: and in course of time the arts ran to so low a pitch among the Hebrews, that the people were obliged even to carry their ploughshares down to the Philistine cities to have them sharpened. The one race dwelt in large and important cities: their civilization, of a somewhat effeminate type, was at least far in advance of

that of the Israelites, and in all the future, down to David's time, the Philistines had the upper hand. All that Samson and others could do, was to annoy the Philistines, the Hebrew leaders were unable to confer any real harm on them.

It is a fact that should not be omitted in our account, that the name of Palestine is derived from Philistine: and was imposed on the whole country by the Europeans, who did not look further into the population of the country than to see who were the people who lived on the coast, and gave the general name accordingly. The country under the direct control of the Philistines ran hard up to the promontory of Carmel, although at this time it is difficult to decide with certainty what was the northern boundary of their territory. They were, however, a race allied in character and religion to the Phœnicians who held the northern coast: yet the latter occupied this country much earlier than did the Philistines, and were a far more energetic and powerful people. The Philistines had the capacity to develop commercial interests: but they did not do so, and allowed the two ports of Joppa and Gaza to lie quite unused, so far as any extensive commerce was concerned. Their most important cities were Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, Ekron and Ashdod. Joppa, although under their control, was, strictly speaking, not in their possession, but contained the property of the tribe of Dan. But the five cities named together just above, formed the Philistine confederacy, and were not only collectively powerful, but were strong even alone. The solitary ruins of Ashkelon, which stand hard by the sea, bear witness in their mournful grandeur, to the strength of the ancient city whose name they bear even to the present day; while Gaza remains, not a mass of deserted ruins, but a town of from five to seven thousand inhabitants, surrounded by orange groves, and keeping up active commercial relations with the Arabs of the desert and the caravans which pass through, on their way to Damascus or to Egypt. Ekron and Ashdod still exist, or rather very fragmentary ruins of them are found: and Arab villages mark



GAZA.

The modern city, occupying the site of ancient Gaza, and a place of considerable importance in trade.

the site of ancient Philistine cities: but of Gath not a trace remains. Many have been the inquiries for it: and although I am strongly inclined to think that the white rock which may be seen across the plain, lying at the base of the Judean hills, and which bore in the Crusader's time the name Blanche Garde, marks its site, still this is a mere conjecture: and it is overset by that of Stanley who conjectures that this white rock was the site of the ancient city of Lebonah, which played an important role during the great Assyrian invasion. All the Philistine cities with the exception of Gath of course, bear the ancient names very slightly changed,—Gaza becoming Ghazzeh, Ashkelon being Askelon, Ashdod, Esdud, and Ekron Akir.

The Philistine territory was divided into two longitudinal sections, a sandy strip, running along the sea-shore and parallel with it, and the other a strip of fertile land, extending to the very base of the hills of Judah and Dan. It was in the sandy strip that the cities stood. But the whole of the extensive resources which made that tract what it was to those Philistine cities lay in the great fruitfulness of the fertile strip. Even at the present day, left in the neglected state in which it now lies, it manifests in its rank luxuriance what it must have been when subjected to thorough culture. In the height of midsummer the eye rests, even in our day, on a broad reach of grain fields, shaded here and there by olive and orange trees, and making the district beautiful as a garden. Nothing is wanted but a good, stable government to convert this whole plain into one of the finest regions on the globe. Nature has done munificently for it, it is only man who has defrauded it.

CHAPTER XIII.

MICAH AND THE LEVITE—THE WAR OF EXTERMINATION ON BENJAMIN—THE PASTORAL OF RUTH.

The Close of the Book of Judges—The Scene of Sacred Story Moves to the Neighborhood of Jerusalem and then to the Extreme North of Palestine—Tell el Kadi, the Mound of the Judge—The Profuse Jordan Spring Found There—Its Waters, Whence Obtained—The Course Taken by the Spies—Their Report—The Capture of Laish and its Fate—Tristam's Account of the Conquered Region—The Great War of Extermination—The Site of Gibeah—Mizpeh, Whence Named—The Old and the New Place which Bore That Name—The Sacredness of Mizpeh—The Battle which Surged Around that Hallowed Place—The Course of the Battle—The Structure and Contents of the Book of Ruth.

THE book of Judges closes with those episodes which do not follow in chronological order the story of the spirited leaders whose lives we have passed in geographical review. They have a great interest theologically, and are not inferior in value to any part of the book. Yet strictly from a geographical point of view, they need not detain us long. They bring no new part of the country under observation: although their specific field may make us look a little more closely than heretofore into the special topography of particular districts. The story of Micah and the Levite carries us from the tribe of Dan, past Kirjath-jearim, a town known now as Kirjet-el-enab, about twelve miles north-west of Jerusalem, into the mountain district of Ephraim, which has been already quite fully described. We leap over the passes of Manasseh, the plain of Esdraelon, the hills of Zebulon and Naphtali, and find ourselves at the ancient city of Laish, thenceforward to bear the name of Dan, and in connection with Beersheba, to become the northern and



"GODS OF WOOD"—IDOLS OF PAINTED SYCAMORE.

Illustrating the Gods which the Levite stole, and with which he carried on idolatrous worship.

southern landmarks of Palestine. A few miles west of the ancient city of Hazor, and the more modern city of Cesarea Philippi, and those springs of Banaias which have been generally celebrated as the fountain head of the Jordan, is the hill known now as Tell el Kadi, or the Mound of the Judge, at the base of which well up from the ground immense volumes of water, which flows away in a brook of no insignificant dimensions, joining the one which runs southward from the more eastern springs, a short distance north of Lake el Huleh, the ancient Waters of Merom. Almost overhanging both of these profuse and never failing springs, towers the gigantic and snow-crowned Hermon, which makes the natural northern frontier of the Holy Land. Close by the Hill of the Judge, and very near the western fountain-head of the Jordan, stood that ancient city of Laish, which at the time of the conquest was held by a peaceful and prosperous people, having some affiliation with Zidon or Sidon, but not near enough to that rich and powerful city to be of special advantage in case of an invasion. "Quiet and secure" are the terms which describe the condition of the people of Laish. The five spies who went northward to discover a fresh field to supply the wants of the tribe of Dan, discovered this city and the beautiful country in the neighborhood, one of the loveliest regions in all Palestine. Their report was favorable, and after their return to the true territory of Dan, down in its little sea-side corner, an expedition of six hundred men was organized and sent northward for the purpose of conquering the city of Laish. The result was immediately and unequivocally favorable; the city was taken at the point of the sword, and the people put to death. The name was changed to Dan in commemoration of the freedom of the tribe, and most people, in view of the proverb from "Dan to Beersheba," have fallen into the notion that the true tribal limits of Dan lay in the north of Palestine.

Tristam, the most recent and at the same time one of the freshest of scientific travelers who have explored the Holy

Land, has given us the following graphic description of the region conquered and settled by the Danites:* "A ride of three miles from the bridge brought us to Tell Kadi, the 'Mound of the Judge,' which thus in the significance of its name still preserves the ancient Dan 'Judge.' On the higher part of the mound, to the south, tradition places the temple of the golden calf, and ruined foundations can still be traced. Nature's gifts are here poured forth in lavish profusion, but man has deserted it. Yet it would be difficult to find a more lovely situation than this, where the 'men of Laish dwelt quiet and secure.' 'We have seen the land, and behold it is very good . . . . . a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth' (Jud. xviii. 9, 10). At the edge of the wide plain, below a long succession of olive-yards and oak-glades which slope down from Banias, rises an artificial looking mound of limestone rock, flat-topped, eighty feet high, and half a mile in diameter. Its western side is covered with an almost impenetrable thicket of reeds, oaks and oleanders, which entirely conceal the shapeless ruins, and are nurtured by the 'lower springs' of Jordan. A wonderful fountain, like a large bubbling basin, the largest spring in Syria, and said to be the largest single fountain in the world, where the drainage of the southern side of Hermon, pent up between a soft and a hard stratum, seems to have found a collective exit. Full-grown at birth, at once larger than the Hasbany which it joins, the river dashes through an oleander thicket."

The great war of extermination which was waged against Benjamin carries us to the immediate neighborhood of Jerusalem. Gibeah, around which the events revolve, was a place about four miles north of the ancient Jebus, now Jerusalem, and occupied the place, in all probability, where now stands the Arab village known as Tuleil el Ful. The place where the leaders of the tribes were summoned to take counsel respecting the outrage done to a woman, was Mizpeh, a well-known and frequently-repeated biblical name. Most travelers and

*Tristam, Land of Israel, p. 585.



JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

writers on Hebrew history have supposed that this Mizpeh was the prominent eminence a few miles north of Jerusalem, now known as Neby Samwil, whence is had the most extensive prospect to be gained in all southern Palestine. And without much doubt, this notable eminence which almost every tourist of our day ascends, was known during the time of the kingdom as Mizpeh; but *the* Mizpeh where the tribes came together to discuss what should be done in regard to Benjamin, was no other, in my judgment, than that ancient watch tower on one of the easternmost hills of the Gilead range, where Jacob parted from Laban, where Jephthah entered upon his signal service of deliverance, and which was the one spot most hallowed of all. Not even Gilgal down in the Jordan valley, or secluded Shiloh up in the mountains of Ephraim, could vie with Mizpeh, beyond the river, for sacred eminence. There it was, I cannot help thinking, that the warriors came together and into covenant that they would not return to their homes until they had revenged the dreadful and unparalleled indignity offered to the Levites' companion. It is true the other Mizpeh was but two and a half miles west of Gibeah, but even that does not appear to help the argument. The event was so fearful, the crime so great, that a journey to the place where it was thought God might most surely be met, was not thought of; in a crisis which nearly involved the extermination of a tribe, distance was of but little account.

But if it be thought open to question whether Mizpeh was the hight east of the Jordan or northward of Jerusalem, there is none resting upon the place where the Benjamites committed their act of dastardly violence and lewdness, and where their deed was avenged upon their tribe. Around the hill known as Tuleil el Ful, or the "Hill of Beans," surged that three days' battle, where the odds were so fearfully against the Benjamites, but where in the first two days' contest they were unequivocally victorious. Away towards the north-east, at the right of the dark peak of Ophrah, may be seen the

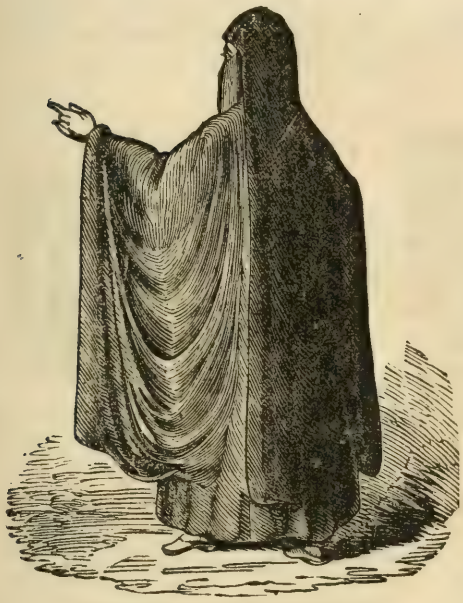
whitish conical hill, on the summit of which the remnant of the tribe of Benjamin assembled, as a last resort; and the village seen there in our time, still bears the name Rimmon which was given to the hill, or "rock Rimmon" in that early day. Away across the Jordan, among the heights of Gilead, was that city of Jabesh, its site not yet ascertained with cer-



EASTERN WOMAN WITH VEIL.
[1] Illustrating the style of dress which doubtless was in vogue in Ruth's time.

tainty, between whose inhabitants and the tribe of Benjamin there was some kind of understanding, which caused the former to absent themselves from the great assembly at Mizpeh. Away northward amid the hills of Ephraim was the secluded nest of Shiloh, where the Benjamites won by a ruse not unlike that once resorted to at Rome, wives to restock, in conjunction with the maidens of Jabesh-gilead, the almost annihilated population of Benjamin.

The beautiful pastoral of Ruth revolves around Bethlehem. There in that rolling country a few miles south of Jerusalem, we see the simple and touching procession of events which even then made Bethlehem a notable place in Hebrew history. Away in the distance, between the Dead Sea could be seen then and can be seen now, from the region where Boaz lived, the blue line of the Moabite mountains; so little known to us in detail, but so rich for this one precious association, that among them the great-grandmother of David had her birth, and that she there drank in that rich, soulful and affectionate nature which makes the book that bears her name so peculiarly delightful. Yet the great simplicity of Ruth, and its freedom from geographical allusions, makes my task a mere momentary one. Not far from the grave of Rachel, and in the tribe of Judah, this beautiful woman lived; and she whose descendants were to populate the line of the Messiah, had her home in that same town of Bethlehem whose name is now immortal.

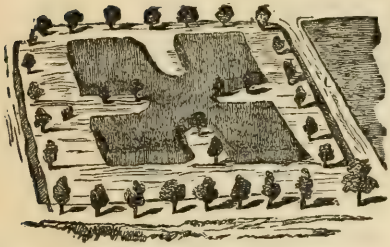


EASTERN WOMAN WITH VEIL.

It may not be aside from the purpose of these pages to call attention to the remarkable manner in which the pastoral life and customs presented to us in the book of Ruth, are to be seen in slightly changed form, in Palestine at the present day. The gleaning in the fields, the habit of the owner of the corn



PLOUGHING, HOEING, AND SOWING.



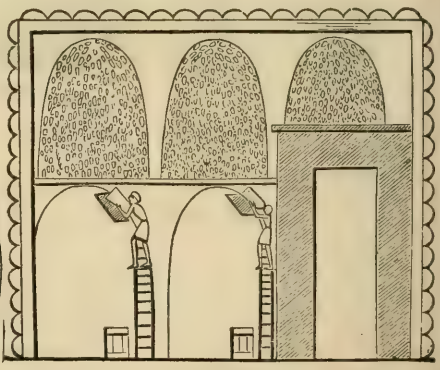
WHEAT-FIELD WITH OLIVES.—(*Surenhusius.*)



WOMEN GRINDING GRAIN WITH THE HAND-MILL OF MODERN SYRIA.—(*Ayre.*)



ANCIENT HOES.—(*Wilkinson.*)



GRANARY,

Showing how the grain was put in, and that the doors *a*, *b*, were intended for taking it out. (*Wilkinson.*)

to sleep on the threshing-floor to prevent the grain being stolen, the parching of wheat and barley ears, the subsequent beating-out of the kernels by sticks, and the dipping of them into vinegar; the habit still prevalent among the Jews of Barbary of throwing a shoe in the face, and found even with us in the modified form of casting a slipper after a newly married bride; the bearing of grain in the large and coarse oriental veil; all these features of the book of Ruth are still found. So too is the transacting of all important business in the gate of the city, the calling in of the elders and the passers by as witnesses, the dignified and courteous salutations when Boaz and the simple reapers met in the field. In the East these allusions to God, on meeting and parting, are much more common than they are with us. With us the good-by, a contraction for "God be with you," is about the only phrase which we have that carries us back to the words of the Hebrew dignitary and the reapers, "Jehovah be with you," and "Jehovah bless thee." This shows us not the inspiration, but the authenticity of the book of Ruth. Indeed, the whole of that beautiful pastoral breathes the spirit of the East, and brings before us, in the most marked manner, the life of ancient Palestine.

CHAPTER XIV.

SAMUEL THE PRINCELY.

The First Book of Samuel a Real Continuation of Judges—Samuel a True Member of the Line of Men who Judged Israel—Contrast Between Samson and Samuel—The Religious Degeneracy of the Hebrews—The Profligacy of Eli's Sons a Symptom of the Age—The First Battle With the Philistines—Victory at Eben-ezer—The Ark and its Use During the Battle—The Death of Hophni and Phinehas—Its Effect on Eli—The Ark Passes Into the Hands of the Philistines—They get Rid of It—Another Battle With the Philistines.

THE first book of Samuel is a real continuation of the book of Judges, although it no sooner opens than we discover that we are entering upon a new period, that there is a craving for a new and more settled form of government; and that the people will not be content till they, like the nations around them, have a king to reign over them. Yet we open the books of Samuel, and find ourselves still under the regime of the Judges, although in Eli first and then in Samuel, the character of Judge is considerably modified by the priestly and prophetical function. At the time of Samuel's advent we are about eleven hundred years before Christ, fairly entering the general historical period of the world. Samuel was a cotemporary of Samson, and in the one we see the natural counterpart of the other. In Samson we see the impersonation of the highest physical strength, and we also know how impotent is this quality if divorced from the spirit of religion. Samson spends a lifetime of conquest with the Philistines, inflicting some annoyance upon them, but no real loss; irritating them severely, but never weakening them. He left them at his death, just as strong as ever, and just as determined in their opposition to

Israel. In Samuel we see the triumph of prayer; like Samson a Nazarite; both wearing unshorn locks; both abstemious so far as strong drink is concerned; both given to the Lord by their mothers; both brought into personal conflict with the Philistines; but the latter full of power, and overcoming them, and making good the words uttered by his mother Hannah in her beautiful Magnificat, "by strength shall no man prevail."

At the time of Samuel's advent it is very clear that the religious degeneracy of the Hebrews had touched its lowest point; the rearing of such sons as Hophni and Phinehas in the house of a high priest, the neglect of religious service, the abuse of the rites of religion by the servants of the altar, all show that the old heart of the Hebrew's faith had been eaten out. The book of Judges shows failures on every page; reveals clearly that in that lawless age God was forgotten, his tabernacle neglected, his rites scorned, his worship abused. At the beginning of Samuel we see that the cup was full, and are made ready to hear of the destruction of all worship at Shiloh, and the overthrow of the Israelites at the hand of the Philistines. The special symptom of that wicked age, is the extreme greed and profligacy of Eli's sons. Eli, himself, seems to have been negatively a good man, that is, amiable, devout, and faithful to his duties within the tabernacle, and yet weak and indulgent. His sons are types of the evils which always infest a corrupt church, and their two sins, the grasping of temporal good and the indulgence of unlawful passion, still remain the sins of every degenerate priesthood. Not content with the breast and shoulder which were due to the priest, they plunged a three-pronged fork into the pot and seized what they could; and breaking over the rule that the fat should be first cut off from raw meat and offered to the Lord, they demanded the fat for themselves, and threatened to take it even by force. To this must be added the gross offence of committing fornication at the very door of the tabernacle. Such things could only be permitted in an age

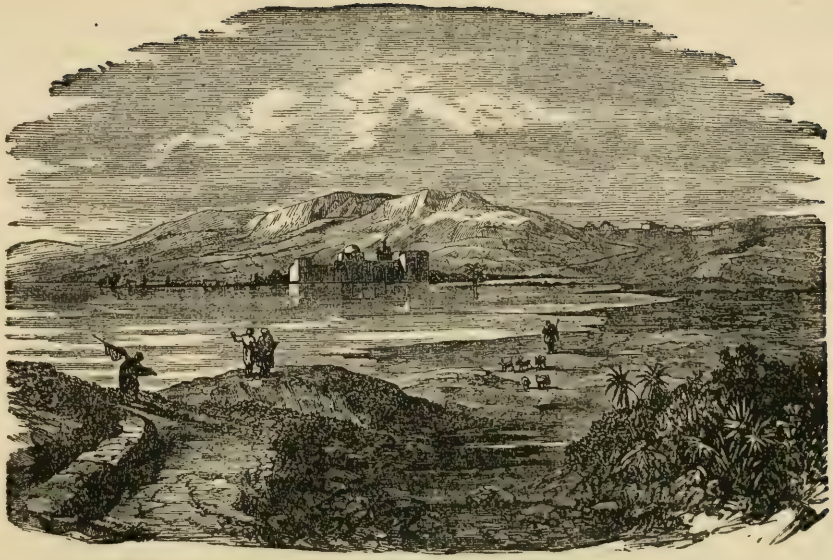
of great wickedness,—an age in which Elkanah's and Hannah's piety was altogether exceptional.

Subsequently to the call of the little Samuel, through whose lips the doom of Eli's house was to be pronounced, occurred the first battle with the Philistines recorded in the books which bear the name of Samuel. We are led to suppose that this battle followed in strict sequence upon the death of Samson, and was the outgrowth of the anger of the Philistines at the death of three thousand of their number. They collected their army and marched north-eastward into the hill-country, halting at a place called Aphek, whose location, though now unknown to us, was just on the outermost confines of Dan, and near the spot where the hills melt into the Philistine plain. The Israelites pitched at Eben-ezer, a place afterward to be more noted than it was then, but whose precise location remains unknown to the present day. The result of the conflict was disastrous to the Israelites, who lost four thousand men. So signal a reverse called for decisive action. The Hebrew army rallied, and thinking that the presence of the ark would bring unquestionable success to them, they sent up into the hill-country of Ephraim, and brought it down from its seclusion at Shiloh. The presence of the sacred article on the field of battle was made known by a portentous shouting "so that the earth rang again." The Philistines interpreted quite correctly the reason of the exultation, and were sure that the time had now come for a decisive battle. "Wo unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness." They clearly had some acquaintance with Hebrew history although their notion of "plagues in the wilderness" was a little mixed. The result of the second battle was more disastrous to the Israelites than the first had been. Not only were they beaten, but they lost thirty thousand men and the ark of God. This last loss was what completed the dismay. The Scripture narrative gives us a beautifully explicit account of the effect of this event on

Eli. His sons had been slain, and a messenger from the nimble race of Benjamin had run from the battle-field up into the hill-country of Ephraim, and onward to Shiloh. Eli was sitting on the gate, aged, infirm, but still most anxious to hear the news of the battle. The messenger brought the tidings that there had been a battle and that Israel had been defeated. Eli could bear up under that and was ready to hear on. The young man told him that his sons Hophni and Phinehas had been slain. Eli bore even that, the loss of his own children did not crush him; there remained one thing more to hear, more dreadful still. The man went on: "and the ark of God is taken." That sentence struck the fatal blow. "Then burst his mighty heart," and gathering up his mantle he fell backward to the ground and killed himself in the fall.

The ark passed into the hands of the Philistines, but it proved a most troublesome and fatal guest. Carried first to Ashdod and placed in the temple of Dagon, the first god of that city, it brought the reign of that tutelary divinity to destruction. Sent thence to Gath, as too dangerous an object to be harbored, it brought upon the people of that city a more grievous trouble, if possible, than the loss of their god. An incursion of mice and a prevalence of boils followed, and the people of Gath were as anxious to send away the ark as had been the people of Ashdod. Thence it was carried to Ekron, a city near the Danite frontier, and but seven miles away from the border town of Beth-shemeth. The lords of the Philistines hit upon the device mentioned in the Scripture record, and the two cows, harnessed to a new cart on which the ark was placed, left their young behind them, contrary to the instincts of nature, and took the road running north-eastward, "lowing as they went," till they reached Beth-shemeth two miles beyond the point where the plain ceased and the hills commenced.

The great outbreak of divine wrath on the people assembled in great numbers to receive the ark back, is to be interpreted simply in the light of the extreme familiary implied in



ASHDOD.

ALL THAT IS LEFT OF THE ONCE FAMOUS PHILISTINE CAPITAL.

It was a place of idol worship; and here the Philistines placed the ark of the covenant in the temple of Dagon; and here Philip was found after the conversion of the Eunuch.

looking into the ark. If the time had come when the most sacred emblem of religion could be subjected to the curiosity of an idle multitude, it were not strange that God should renew the impressive signs of his being which he had showed when the chosen people entered the promised land.

Glad to be rid of so dangerous an object, which appeared to them to bring a curse to friend and foe alike, they allowed it to go farther up into the hill-country, and to be deposited at the city of Kirjath-jearim, the present Kurjet-el-enab, a village about ten miles north-west of Jerusalem. There it remained for twenty years, long wearisome years, as we plainly see. "And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim that the time was long."

It was during this long interval that a third battle was fought with the Philistines. Samuel had begun the work of reform, and led the way zealously by the purity of his own life, and the solemn attention which he paid to the duties of religion. The third battle was fought near the scene of the first, and resulted in a decisive victory. Then it was that the stone Eben-ezer was set up, a name of memorial not only then, but down even to our time a name indicative of the favor of the Lord. And after the rout of the Philistines, Samuel continued to prosecute the duties of a judge, passing in turn to Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh, and Ramah, an unknown spot where was his home. By this time Mizpeh, which in the earlier time had only indicated that frontier point in the eastern Gilead hills where Jacob and Laban parted, and where Jephthah ratified his vow, had been transferred to a conspicuous height a little north of Jerusalem, and which is identified by most travelers with the Neby Samwil. Respecting this we can not be quite certain: yet that Mizpeh was in that immediate vicinity is almost certain. Of the situation of Ramah, Samuel's home, the less that is said here the better. The subject is enveloped in the greatest obscurity, and in the present state of our knowledge regarding Palestine, we can hardly expect to ascertain where it lay.

CHAPTER XV.

FAILURE OF THE COMMONWEALTH—CHOICE OF A KING—SAUL.

Moses' Policy Precluded Forever the Establishing of a King Over the Jews—Yet he Feared a Degeneracy which should sometime Result in Having a King—Provision Made to This End—Failure of the Commonwealth—Encroachment of the Philistines on the West—Of Arab Barbarians on the East—No Smith in Israel—All Repairing of Tools Done by the Philistines—Feelings of Weakness—Saul's Search for his Asses—Geographical Difficulties—Unsolved Questions of Location—Across the Jordan to Jabesh-gilead—Its Deliverance—Saul's Wonderful Alacrity—The Battle at Michmash—Other Advantages which Followed—The Slaughter of Agag—The Rejection of Saul.



HERE is not the slightest question that the idea of the Hebrew Commonwealth, as it lay in the mind of Moses, precluded forever the placing of a king over the Jews. The whole stress of his injunctions lay upon the keeping up of a personal relation between each man and his God; and the state, so far as it had to exist as an institution in and of itself, was to be without any head, save Jehovah alone. Yet he did recognize the probability, that when the Jews should become the acknowledged masters of Palestine, they should want to copy the ways of the nations around them; and like those nations, should insist on having a king. Moses closed that loop-hole, and in the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy he laid down, once for all, his instructions respecting the choice of a king, in case the nation should in the course of time, become so infatuated as to desire one. He was to be a man taken from the Hebrews themselves; he was not to encourage the importation or breeding of horses, lest his people should lose their simple, bucolic character, and cultivate

the manners of those warlike neighbors of theirs who used the horse as a prime medium of carnage; he also enjoined that the king should not take a plurality of wives, nor encourage the importation of silver and gold. How strikingly all these provisions were set at naught by Solomon, no reader will need to be reminded; and the wisdom of Moses in making these was best seen when Solomon's fall had shown to what evils an oriental despotism is always exposed.

But at the close of the epoch of the judges, nothing is plainer than that the commonwealth had failed, and the outburst of national feeling in demanding a stronger and more secure government was only natural. On the west the Philistines had so far broken over the old lines which used to bound their territory, as to have planted themselves not only in the very heart of the hills of Benjamin, but also in the valley of the Jordan; while on the east side of that river the wild, and powerful, and ferocious tribes were meditating invasion and destruction. The Hebrew nation had touched its lowest point. "There was no smith found in Israel; and when the people wanted their very garden tools repaired, they were forced to carry them to the Philistines cities, since their enemy, now again having the upper hand, would not suffer the Hebrews to have artisans, lest they should make weapons for the people. The whole Jewish population was unarmed. In case of war, they had no means of defence save ox-goads and clubs, and were utterly unable to cope with the well-armed and well-disciplined Philistines.

All these causes combined made the people feel their weakness, and constrained them to cry out for a king. The office had been almost established in the time of Gideon and Abimelech, but the time was not ripe then; the evils and weakness of the commonwealth had not been duly felt, and no change was made till the time of Samuel. But then all was ripe for a change; and the strength of the popular demand can be measured by the utter want of effect which followed Samuel's vivid and truthful delineation of the brutal excesses

committed by all oriental despots, and the brutal exactions which they made upon the property of their subjects. "And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day. Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, nay; but we will have a king over us. That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, go ye every man unto his city." (I. Sam. viii. 10–22.)

The search of Saul for his asses takes us over a tract which we must conjecture, for as we do not know the situation of Ramah, Samuel's home, and cannot ascertain with certainty where lay Shalim and Shalisha, it is idle to attempt to follow the tall, young man and his servant as they wander over the country in search of the missing cattle. This is almost the



EGYPTIAN ASSES, SADDLED—ANCIENT.

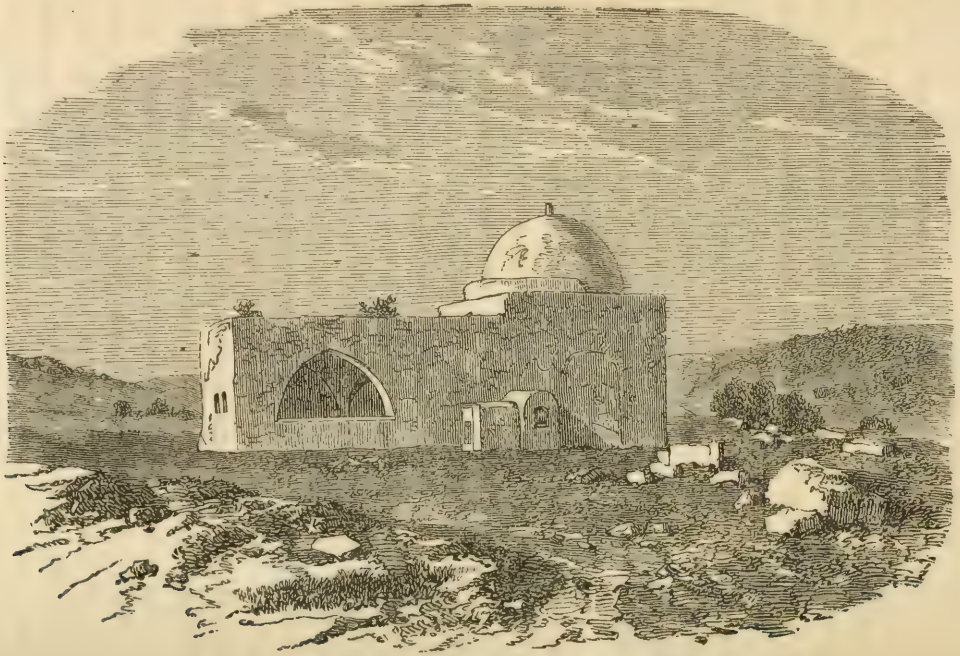


EGYPTIAN ASSES, SADDLED—MODERN.

The Ass was the only beast of burden which was in general use. This still remains the case.

only real geographical difficulty which we encounter in the Bible: elsewhere we have data which guide us, but here we have so many contradictions that our investigations are baffled at every turn. I can not help thinking, however, that Ramah lay near Hebron, as both Dr. Wolcott and Mr. Van der Velde have conjectured, and that the region over which the search for the missing army was prosecuted, lay between the hills of Ephraim, north of Jerusalem, and the neighborhood of Hebron. But the matter is not at all of first class importance; it is a secondary matter, and were all difficulties solved, there would be no special light thrown thereby on any difficulties of the Bible. Were this the place for a learned disquisition we might enter upon the various theories which have been framed respecting the location of Zuph, Ramah, Shalim and Shalisha. But in a general way the reader can see the course of Saul and his companions first southward almost to the southern confines of Palestine, and then after the interview with Samuel and the service of anointing, the retracing of the way past the tomb of Rachel, which is still to be seen near the line of Bethlehem, and back to the home of Saul a few miles north of Jerusalem.

The first event of Saul's reign carries us across the Jordan to Jabesh-gilead, a city which has already come before us in connection with the Benjamite war of extermination. Just what connection there was between the tribe of Benjamin and that trans-jordanic city, can not now be discovered, but it is clear that there was some, because at the time of the great gathering at Mizpeh, to punish the Benjamites for upholding the sin in the matter of the Levite's wife, Jabesh-gilead was the only city that was not represented. Here in the time of Saul the city comes into view again: this time there was an army of fierce Ammonite Arabs at its gates, demanding the surrender of the city. A compact was entered into that in case the people of Jabesh should not have succor in seven days they would open their gates and submit to have their right eyes put out. The promptness of Saul to come to their



RACHEL'S TOMB.
One of the most authentic places in the Holy Land.

rescue must always be set to the credit of that impulsive chieftain. Here his character does flash out for an instant with a beautiful light. There have been few things in all military history like the rallying of forces which followed Saul's call, and an army of three hundred and thirty thousand men never came together in less time. Their rendezvous was at Bezek, about fourteen miles south-west of the Succoth ford of the Jordan. Jabesh-gilead lay eight or ten miles from the Jordan, on the brink of a ravine which ran eastward from the deep valley of the river. That last day's march, after the promise had been given, "to-morrow by that time the sun be hot" he would succor them, is one of the most brilliant day's works in all the records of quick marches. But the whole world knows that he reached the eagerly expecting city, and brought the relief which they needed. This act was never forgotten. Long afterward the people of that city stole across the river, and when the body of Saul was hanging in disgrace on the walls of Beth-shean, they bore him away and gave him decent burial, and not only so, but they and they alone gave hospitable entertainment to the descendants of Saul, when all others neglected and despised them.

The battle at Michmash is very fully told in the Bible, more so even than many others which really have more intrinsic interest. Yet it was a notable contest, and in it the character of Saul comes very clearly to the light. Like so many other battles which have already passed under our review, this one took place in the ravines north of Jerusalem, and its scene may now be studied with much ease. It was in or near the same wady up which Joshua advanced from Gilgal to the relief of Gibeon, and Gibeah the home of Saul, was but a few miles east of the city which Joshua relieved. The great Wady Snweinit in one of its subdivisions narrows into a gorge about a mile wide, on the south side of which was Gibeah, where were Saul and Jonathan his son. The Philistines had intrenched themselves at Michmash, across the ravine and in full sight. Between the two, though not in a direct line, were

the two tooth-like crags Bozez and Seneh, which played an important part at the opening of the battle, hiding the two Hebrew warriors as they issued out in the dim twilight of the morning. Standing below in the gorge they were espied by the Philistines aloft, and were defied in language which to our ears seems like the threats of boys in the streets. But Jonathan and his armor bearer accepted the challenge, and, sure that the Philistines were afraid to venture down and attack them, they slowly crept up on their hands and knees. The Philistines were apprehensive that the Hebrews had issued from the holes and caves where they were skulking, and when Jonathan and his companion burst upon their astonished sight they were received, not as if two men, but as if a host. The Philistines were thrown into instant confusion, and Saul who was standing in Gibeah about a mile away, and passing through the gray twilight of the morning, was unable to make out the cause of the movement in the Philistine camp. But detecting very soon the absence of his son and the armor bearer, he divined the cause at once, and boldly struck across the ravine, followed by the few hundred men who were with him. The Philistines were instantly put to flight. The rout was complete; the Israelites followed them down the same pass over which Joshua drove the defeated Canaanites, the descent of Bethoron, and the victory was so complete that the Philistines were dislodged and compelled to fall back into their own territory.

This decisive advantage was followed up by others, not fully recounted in the Scriptures, over the kings of Syria, Edom, Moab and Ammon, as well as by the utter overthrow of the Amalekites who occupied the desert tract just south of Palestine. These were among the fiercest of all the wild Arab tribes in the region, and the hostility which they showed to the Jews as they came through the wilderness, in the time of Moses, was made the pretext for just as thorough an onslaught on them as has often been meditated and attempted by us, on the Indian tribes along the western frontier. In the story

Saul seems to be more humane than Samuel in the attempt to spare the huge barbarian king, but inasmuch as almost beyond question his clemency was exerted simply that Agag might grace his triumph, Samuel's wrath was kindled, and the unreliable, impulsive, moody king was rejected by Samuel as unworthy to wear the crown of a great nation. That scene at the close of the fifteenth chapter of first Samuel is one of the most dramatic in the whole Bible. Saul fiercely rejected by the prophet, and in his despair and disgrace, clinging so to Samuel's mantle as to tear it apart; the great prophet causing the huge Agag to approach, who coming slowly and tremblingly near, and reading his certain doom in the stern



WARRIOR WITH HELMET AND SHIELD.

and inexorable features of Saul, exclaiming, "the bitterness of death is past;" and the closing act in which, while the gigantic Saul was crouching in his crushed and broken pride, Samuel hewed the great Amalekite chieftain in pieces; all this is worthy of commemoration by the noblest pencil that human skill has ever wielded

CHAPTER XVI

DAVID AND SAUL.

The Anointing of David—Not Followed by his Immediate Accession to Power—David had a Reputation Even in His Youth—The Rare Qualities Which a Shepherd was Compelled to Have—David's Additional Accomplishments—His Exploits—The Psalms Written During his Shepherd Life—Saul's Madness—Similar in Character to That of Theodore the Late Emperor of Abyssinia—The Contest With Goliath—The Geographical Situation—The Friendship With Jonathan—David Hunted Before Saul—The Refuge Places Where we Find Him—He Even Seeks Shelter Among the Philistines—The Cave of Adullam—Moab—Return to his Native Heath—Keilah and its Deliverance—Recent Identifications of David's Haunts—Physical Character of Southern Palestine—David's Wild, Wretched, Wander-Years—Grand Attack on Saul—The Philistines at Jezreel—The Death of Saul and Jonathan.

THE rejection of Saul was followed by the anointing of David as King: and yet it was many years before the former ceased to be, and the latter began to be, the actual ruler. The selection and appointment of David was for some time kept secret; it is doubtful whether even his brethren knew of it; for although Samuel caused all the sons of Jesse to pass before him, the youngest was in all probability anointed, as Saul had been before him, in great privacy. At any rate, his brothers appear not to have known for some time that this signal honor had been conferred upon David. And yet it would seem that the youngest of that family was a man who had a reputation even then; that he was a man known not only in Bethlehem and its immediate vicinity, but throughout the land. When Saul fell into his attack of madness, and some minstrel was needed to minister to him and soothe his dark and moody spirit, David is spoken of as if well-known for his skill as a player, and as a man of



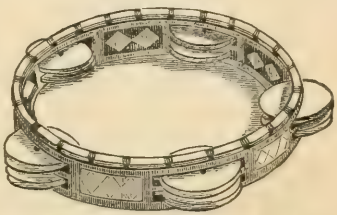
ANCIENT HARPS.
From Nineveh Marbles.—(*Ayre.*)



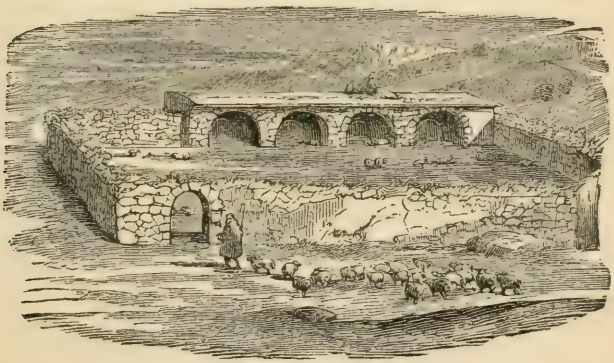
ANCIENT HARP.
From the Tomb at Thebes, called Belzoni's.—(*Ayre.*)



ANCIENT SIGNET RINGS, WITH IMPRESSIONS FROM THEM.—(*Fbn.*)



TAR—"TIMBREL" OR "TABRET" OF A. V.
(Lane's Modern *Egyptians.*)



ANCIENT SHEEP-FOLD.

general mark. The verse in which his gifts are described settles this matter, and makes him out as a personage of note. He is recommended as "cunning in playing, a mighty, valiant man, a man of war, prudent in matters, and a comely person." By playing is meant not only mechanical skill on the lute, but the art of minstrelsy as it was practised by David's great cotemporary, blind old Homer. Besides this, to be a shepherd then, in the rocky fastnesses of Judea was not to lead that simple, inoffensive life which has generally thought to be characteristic of a shepherd. The country was then infested with bears and lions, and it required great vigilance and courage to keep them off. Besides, the wealth of the people in those days lay in their cattle; and David was in reality the custodian of his father's property, and in general trustfulness took precedence over his older brethren. His great strength and capacity as a shepherd are well attested by the incident which he related to Saul: "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by the beard, [mane], and smote him and slew him." In my own mind there does not exist the faintest doubt that David was already well-known as a man of great mark, and that when the necessity arose of finding a man who should be worthy to minister to the diseased mind of the king, David was at once recognized to be the one. In this case the divine intimations made to Samuel appear to have exactly coincided with human judgment, and here as so often in the Bible divine sovereignty and human freedom seem to have been at one.

Of David's shepherd life we really know but little; yet in such psalms as he then wrote, the eighth, nineteenth, twenty-ninth, and above all the incomparable twenty-third, we have a clear indication that his minstrelsy was even then all that it was when an older and a wiser man. Indeed the songs which were "pressed out of" him during those wild and stormy days of his youth, when he was hunted down by Saul, are among

his finest efforts, and in them the extremity to which he was driven, brought him to such a perfect sense of dependence on God, as to cause the sweetest and noblest things he ever wrote to take the form which they wear.

The madness into which Saul fell after his rejection by Samuel is one to which oriental despots have always been peculiarly subject; all men placed in circumstances where their will has no law, their temper no restraint, almost always degenerate into moody creatures of caprice, and their boundless jealousy, passion and turbulence often land them in lunacy. Music in these cases is almost the only solace; and even in lunacy as it exists among us, music is the best alleviation. The madness of Saul was very like that to which Theodore, the late emperor of Abyssinia, was subject, indeed I have often been reminded of the really strong likeness which exists between the two men in more respects than this. Both were the semi-barbarian princes of semi-barbarous peoples; both were men of talents, will, despotic mind, ungovernable temper, ambition, jealousy and dark, morbid, brooding spirit; and in the hurling of javelins at David, and the occasional flashes of sunshine which played over the sullen fits of Saul's anger, we have the exact image of the outbreaks of Theodore's anger at the English captives, and the intermittent acts of kindness which he showed them at times.

With David's contest with Goliath we come to an epoch in the history of the shepherd boy. The Philistines, those inveterate enemies, had again been opening hostilities, and were pressing hard on the western frontier. They had crept up into the hills south-west of Bethlehem, and were on the southern border of the important wady then known as Elah, or the Valley of the Terebinth, but now as Wady Sumt. On the southern side of this gorge stood the cities of Shocoh and Azekah, the former of which still bears its ancient name but slightly changed.

Between these cities was the Philistine army, how well equipped we can judge from the full details given us respecting

the elaborate armor worn by Goliath. On the northern side of the gorge was the Hebrew army, doubtless unarmed and most imperfectly prepared for a contest. Down in the gorge between was where the single combat between David and the nine-foot-high giant, took place. The result was immediately decisive, and the Philistine army fled after the fall of their huge champion, straight down the valley, whose general course is north-west, to the cities of Gath and Ekron on the Philistine plain. It was after that battle that, according to Lightfoot, the ninth psalm was written.

The story of David and Jonathan's friendship needs little comment in this work; it is the great friendship of history. It was complicated with conditions which would have destroyed any compact less noble, and heroic, and tender, but which caused this to be cemented all the closer. The Greek and Roman literatures give us nothing as a match picture to the mutual love of David and Jonathan; and nothing in modern times comes near it. It is, in one word, peerless. Beginning in warm regard, it mounted, after they became brothers-in-law, up to the most wondrous heights of self-denial, and of heroic devotion. But its story need not be told here.

We come now to the painful narrative of David's wanderings when hunted like a partridge by Saul. We have a clear picture of his flight by night when aided by his wife, and date from that epoch the eleventh and fifty-ninth psalms. We get a glimpse of him at Naioth, near Ramah, where Samuel was living in company with a colony of prophets, but we see him not long in safety there, being followed thither at once by the crafty Saul. Flying from his imperfect shelter with the great Prophet, we see him seeking refuge with the High Priest of the nation, the cautious Abimelech, and witness the hungry David, reaching Nob on the Sabbath, craving to have the ceremonial law respecting shew-bread waived, in his behalf, that he might stay his fainting strength. Among the company sheltered there, we mark the sinister eye of the crafty Edomite,

Doeg, a chief servant of Saul, and we, like David, feel sure that he is the man who will betray the young refugee. Nob, the place where Abimelech lived, surrounded by his colony of priests, was on the north-western slope of the Mount of Olives, in full sight of Jerusalem, then not a Jewish city, but in the possession of the Jebusites. Betrayed by Doeg, a heathen from the mountains of Idumea, David had no longer a friend in his own country, and was compelled to fly to a foreign land. His choice of Gath was a strange one; we can hardly see why he placed himself among a people so hostile as the Philistines were; and least of all, why he selected the very home of Goliath. But he did so, only to find that the place was too hot for him, and that he must shield himself from personal injury by taking refuge in a pretense of madness. After his escape from Gath he wrote the fifty-sixth and the thirty-fourth psalms. His next place of shelter was at the cave of Adullam, on the border of the Philistine territory and not far from Gath. The legend which makes Adullam identical with the cave of Kheiretun, south-east of Bethlehem, dates only from the crusades. The town of Adullam was south-west of Bethlehem, and in its vicinity, beyond doubt, was the cave that bore the same name. There it was that David assembled his four hundred outlaws, and began to be a power in the land. It was at this time that he composed the one hundred and forty-second psalm.

Finding the quarters too hot for him, even in that limestone district, where caves were so numerous, he crossed over into Moab, and lived for some time in the country of his great-grandparents. He had a cordial reception, for his father was grandson of Ruth, and doubtless the poor, hunted, youthful king was welcomed for Ruth's sake. Where he stayed we know not; only that it was at Mizpeh, a "high place whence there was doubtless a good outlook over the Dead Sea into the mountains of Judah." There it was that he composed the fifty-second, one hundred and ninth, seventeenth, one hundred and fortieth, thirty-fifth, and sixty-fourth psalms.

We know not why David returned from Moab to his own native hills, but apparently his love of home was too strong for his prudence, and although beyond the Dead Sea he was safe, yet he preferred to be in his own land, even at risk to himself, rather than to be an exile in the land of his great-grandparents. We find him next at Keilah, relieving a garrison which had been attacked by the Philistines. Here his band of six hundred valiant men brought immediate relief, and the Philistines were dislodged. Keilah, the city thus succored, was a strong fortress town, having "gates and bars" to defend it, and was a place of some note. It is not identified with certainty, although there is a place of ruins bearing the name of Kila and found on the road westward from Hebron down into the Philistine plain. We know that this was its general situation, and that it was on or near the Philistine frontier. The rescue of Keilah by David was attended by this sad feature, that the men to whom he thus brought relief proposed to surrender him into the hands of Saul. The poor man had a most unhappy fate. There were hardly any that remained true to him. The people of Ziph, among whom he next took refuge, proved treacherous, and he was compelled to hide himself in the "wilderness" outside the town. It were to little purpose that I dwell on each of the retreats to which David fled. They were after this, all in the territory of Judah, with the exception of Gath, where he found refuge a second time. Most of the towns mentioned in connection with his wanderings are well known to us, having been discovered by Dr. Robinson and other recent travelers. Most of them bear their ancient names, slightly changed. Carmel, for example, is Karmul, Engedi is Ainjidy, Maon is Maan, and Ziph is Zif. The towns of Maon, Ziph and Carmel display ruins of more or less extent, and are a few miles south of Hebron. The district in which they lie is tolerably fertile, and no one wonders at the wealth of Nabal, who notes the extreme fertility of the soil in all tracts where water abounds, and where the ground is carefully tilled. But the wilderness

lying northward and north-eastward is sterile and desolate. Rough hills, dry and destitute of soil, extend away in the distance as far as to the Dead Sea, and although wild in the extreme, still are too savage to be called romantic. Very rare among them are tracts of any beauty, and the charming seclusion of Engedi (Ainjidy) makes almost the only exception to the desolation of the whole scene. This wild tract reaches northward nearly as far as Bethlehem, and was doubtless crossed and recrossed by David during his years of flight, while hunted as a partridge, and followed by Saul with his three thousand picked men, like a "solitary flea," leaping from rock to rock. The psalms, written during these years, display the desperate character of his flight, and his supreme trust in God. They are, so far as we can make them out, the thirty-first, written after the deliverance of Keilah, the fifty-fourth, written while in the wilderness of Ziph, the fifty-seventh, fifty-eighth and sixty-third which bear the marks of Engedi, the fortieth, eighteenth and one hundred and forty-first which also are closely connected with this time of persecution and wandering.

Perhaps it is the seclusion of Engedi which more than any other has engaged human hearts, at this most interesting stage in David's life. The place is one of no little charm: certainly a marked exception to the prevailing sterility of that whole region. A spring breaks from the ground many feet above the level of the Dead Sea and finds its way down the rocks to a plain about one thousand feet square, which in crossing it transforms into an oasis of verdure, and then runs down the almost precipitous shores of the Dead Sea in an irregular line, leaving a track of foliage to show its course. It was near this favorite spot that the cave lay where David spared Saul's life, and not far away, beyond question, was the place where Saul lay and slept while David secretly approached and stole the spear and water-cruse from the very side of the slumbering king.

After this persecution had been most wearisome, David



THE VERDURE OF ENGEDI,
Where brooks and the shade of trees make a miniature Paradise.

takes his large body of men and again goes down to Gath and proffers his services to Achish. Before, he had been repelled, and been obliged to save his life by taking refuge in the guise of madness. But now he is received as an ally. Having been so long persecuted by Saul, it was supposed that he would have little inducement to return to his own land, and having six hundred able-bodied men with him, he might be a valuable helper in time of war. Achish, the king of Gath, gave him the city of Ziklag, the precise situation of which is not known, but which lay south of Gath, and near the border line which divided the rich territory of the Philistines from the desert. After becoming the lord of this city, David began to give his men something to do by waging an exterminating war upon the barbarous tribes which lived toward the south. How great extenuation may be urged for him in this I know not: but perhaps as much as for us in our Indian policy. Apparently these savages were such dangerous foes that it was thought to be the only true protection to society to be rid of them altogether.

While David was engaged in his wars with the wild Arabs of the south, the Philistines were meditating a grand assault on Saul, and at length they moved northward accompanied by David and his six hundred men, and entered the plain of Jezreel. But David was compelled to withdraw, owing to the suspicion of most of the Philistine chiefs that he would desert on the field of battle and make his peace with Saul by going over to his help. It was just at that juncture, too, that David heard of the capture of Ziklag by the Amalekites; and hastening away with his band, he soon overtook the victorious Arabs, rescued his two wives, regained all the spoil, and returned to his own city.

The Philistines crossed the plain of Jezreel and pitched their camp on the southern slope of Jebel Duhy, or little Hermon, as it is often called. It has already come under our view in connection with Gideon the great Judge, and then it bore the name, "Hill of Moreh." The hills of Gilboa, lie

south of this eminence, separated from it by a tongue of the plain, which here runs down to the Jordan valley. Between the mount on which the Philistines were encamped, and Tabor, still farther north, is another tongue of land, connecting the plain of Jezreel with the Jordan valley. But with this one we have now nothing to do. Saul was with his army on the heights of Gilboa, a low wooded range, (though bare in our time) stretching away to the south-east from the great plain. The king could easily look across the level strip at the foot of Gilboa and see the Philistine camp on the south face of little Hermon. The village of Endor lay on this slope, and was in close contiguity to the Philistine army. Saul's midnight visit to the witch was therefore filled with danger. The village where this woman lived still remains, wearing the old name, slightly changed. The next day the fatal battle took place between the Hebrew and Philistine armies, and Saul and his three sons (including Jonathan) were left dead on the field of battle. The head and armor of the tall monarch were sent by the Philistines down to their own cities, and his body was hung upon the walls of Beth-shan, a city in the Jordan valley. The visit of the men of Jabesh-gilead is a touching monument of the affection which they bore to Saul, and the gratitude which they felt to him for the act of kindness which he showed them at the commencement of his reign. The manner in which David received the intelligence of Saul's death heightens, if possible, our admiration of the man, and there fell from his lips then that grand and sweet dirge, than which no finer funeral strain was ever penned.

CHAPTER XVII.

DAVID AS KING—CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM—ALLIANCE WITH PHŒNICIA.

The Career and Misfortunes of Saul's Son—Site of Mahanaim—The Princely Abner—A State of Anarchy and Civil War—David at Hebron—The Region Around that City—The Change of the Capital—The Natural Seat of Government was at Shechem—Zion—Millo—The City of David—Insignificant Size of the Jerusalem of that Day—Great War with the Philistines—A Speedy and Brilliant Campaign—David's False Policy Regarding Philistia—The Alliance with the Phœnicians and What it Meant—The Northern Tribes and their Relations with Phœnicia—David's Palace.

THE separation between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, which is usually thought to be introduced during the reigns of Rehoboam and Jeroboam, really began directly after the death of Saul. His son Ishbosheth, a man of feeble and irresolute nature, immediately assumed the title of king, and established his capital on the east side of the Jordan, at Mahanaim, among the hills of Gilead. The whole region round about Jabesh-gilead always remained faithful to the house of Saul; and Mahanaim could not have been far from the city which had begged for the body of the dead king. Ishbosheth was supported by the princely and powerful Abner; and so long as this able man commanded the army, Saul's son was in secure possession of the throne. Abner swept over the whole northern part of Palestine as far as to the borders of Phœnicia; and returning victorious, it would almost seem as if there were no question about the continuance of the old power in his hand, and that of his royal master. But in an unguarded hour Ishbosheth insulted the high-spirited Abner, who at once deserted him, and proposed to join his fortunes

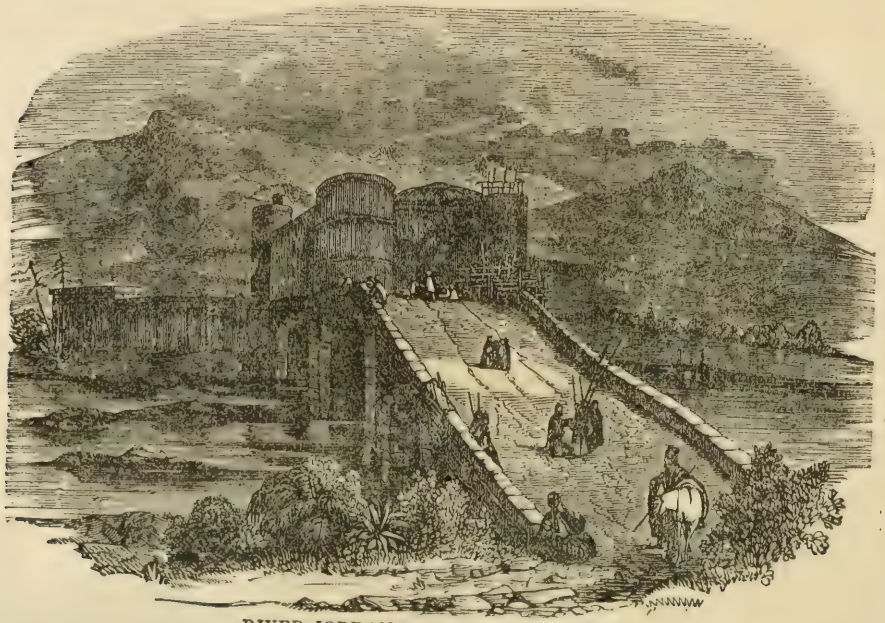
to those of King David. The assassination of Abner by Joab, and of King Ishbosheth by two captains of his own army, brought all contention to an end, and instantly put David on the throne of a united nation.

The confused state of anarchy and civil war lasted for several years. During this time David lived at Hebron, the national capital of Judah, and the most sacred spot then in all the land. Here was the cave of Machpelah; and within it were the bones of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and the place where they were buried had paramount claims to be taken as the capital. Besides, Hebron was in a fertile region; the vale of Eshcol was hard by, and the adjacent hills were all terraced to the top and cultivated with rare skill and patience. It was a much finer capital than the rocky hight of Mahanaim, east of the Jordan, which Ishbosheth had chosen; and in the peaceful Hebron, David reigned for seven years and six months. It was in Hebron that Abner was killed and buried, and over his bier David sung that brief but beautiful dirge, which has become immortal.



THE SO-CALLED GOLDEN GATE OF JERUSALEM.

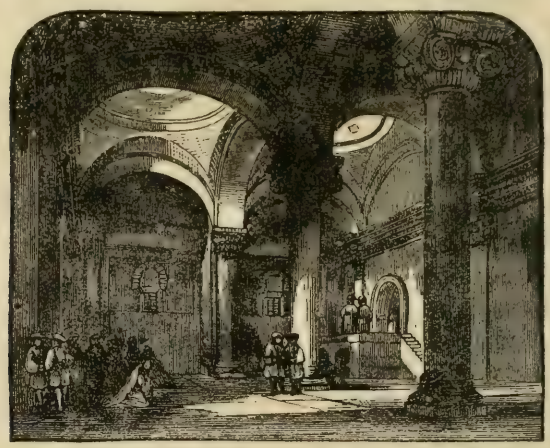
The change which transferred David from being king of Judah to being king of all Israel, made it evidently necessary for him to choose a new capital. Hebron was altogether out of the question, for although admirably adapted to meet the wants of the minor, southern kingdom, when it had been merged in the united and consolidated nation, it was much too far southward. So indeed was Jerusalem, which was selected by David as the seat of government; and had he gone farther



RIVER JORDAN WITH JACOB'S BRIDGE.

north, and taken the spot which of all others was the best adapted to the end in view, the place chosen would have been no other than the fertile vale of Shechem. Had David established his capital there, the whole future history of the country would doubtless have been radically different from what it was.

But Jerusalem had certain claims to attention. It was a fortress, even then in the possession of the Jebusites, and considered unconquerable. Joshua had but partially taken it, and during the five hundred years of the Judges, it was a much



INTERIOR OF THE GOLDEN GATE.
From a view by Catherwood.

coveted, but never enjoyed thing. On the rocky height of Zion the Jebusite stronghold reared its head, and frowned down defiance on all who assayed to capture it. It was, moreover, in the very heart of the conquered country, not on one side, as was the Philistine plain; and no wonder that David desired to gain it. The Jebusite stronghold occupied but a small part of what we are accustomed to think of in connection with the name Jerusalem: it embraced but one hill out of the four on which the subsequent city was to stand: Zion alone was peopled then: Moriah, Acra and Bezetha were mere eminences, having


THE
ENVIRONS
OF
JERUSALEM
English Miles
1
2
3
4
5
JERUSALEM
Hazor
Tell Azûr
Gophna
Jifna
Ophrah
Taiyibeh
Rimmon
Rummon
Bethel
Beitin
Ai
Tell el-Haiyeh
Deir Diwân
Beeroth
Bireh
Kudeirah
Abû Sebah
Lower Beth-horon
Beit Ur et-tahta
Upper Beth-Horon
Beit Ur el foka
Beit Unia
Râmallah
Kefr Akab
Rafat
Michmash
Mukhmas
Geba
Jeba
Ramah
er Râm
Kulondia
Jedireh
Chefirah
Kefirah
B. Dukku
B. Enam
Gibeon
el Jib
Bir Nebala
Biddu
Mizpeh
N. Samwil
B. Hanina
Erha
Hizmeh
Gibeah
Tuleil-el-ful
Anathoth
Anata
Shâfât
Kirjath-jearim
Kuriet el-Aineb
B. Iksa
Nob
Isawiyeh
Kidoniyeh
Litta
tombs
Chesalon
Kesla
D. Yesin
Ain Karim
Deir
Bethany
el Azariyeh
Siloam
Abu Dis
B. Sufafa
esh-Sherâfât
Beit Sahûr-el Atikah
Mar Eliyas
Sur Bahil
Um Tûba
Kh. el-Yehudiyeh
Rachel's Tomb
Zelah
B. Jâla
Bittir
Bethlehem
Beitlahm
el Khudr
B. Sahûr
Deir Mirbeh
Mar Saba
B. Tamr
Etam
Urtas
Dhôr es Sâleh
Reservoirs
(Solomons Pools)
Nukhalin
Jimjum
D. el-Benât
Jeb. Fureidis
Beth Haccerem (Herodium)
Frank Mt.
Khureitûn
Bath-zacharias
B. Sakaria
B. Sawir
Bir
Tekoah
Tekûa
Berachah
Bereikut
Beit Fejjar
Minea
Gedor
Jedur
Merina
B. Ummar
Giloh
Jâla
Bükka
Kusbûr
B. Kheiran
Sair
Beth zur
B. Sur
Halhul
Shiûk
Birez-Zafaraneh
Kasr Antar
Well
el Khân
ed Dem
Khân Hadhûr
Khân
Mar Saba
W. Tâamirah
W. Khureitun
W. Jehâr
W. Hasasah
W. Ain Ghuweir
W. Sulem
W. el-Hôdh
Kh. Fahûh
Jeb'ah
Kh. Habeileh
Kh. Sûm
Ada
Kabû
Abû Ammar
Fukin
Akûr
el-Welejeh
es Seideh
D. Abu Ammar
Soba
Kustul
Sâris
Kh. el-Amûr
Kataneh
W. Mansûr
W. Soleiman
Ain Jifna
et-Tireh
D. Ebziyeh
Kefeiriyeh
Kh. el-Lôz
Ain Kenieh
Janiyeh
Râs Kerka
D. Ammar
Abu Khash
Abû Saideh
B. Illu
Kaubar
Bir Zeit
Yebrûd
Burj Azzil
Dûru
Surda
Ain Yebrûd
el Khudr
Naby
el-Aujeh
es Sâmieh
W. Sâmieh
Arnutieh
Alya
Kefr Musr
Burka
Faraḥ
Kubbeh
K. Haiyeh
Ain Yâlo
Ain Hajjiyeh
el-Hausân
Bîr el-Kulab
W. Musur

little to give them eminence or character, save the tradition that on Moriah, Abraham once raised an altar for his son Isaac. The hill of Zion has a deep natural fosse on three sides: the Vale of Hinnom on the south and east, and the Tyropæon, or Valley of the Cheesemongers, which intervened between it and Moriah. On these three sides it was considered impregnable, and could be held by a small force. On the western side Zion sloped gently away to the shallow vale which lay between it and Acra, the gentle elevation on which now stands the Church of the Holy Sepulcher: and this side was no doubt very strongly fortified. The word Millo, used often in connection with Zion and the city of David, I consider to mean the fortress, or strongly fortified wall which ran across from the Tyropæon to the Vale of Hinnom. The city of David was therefore, as will be seen at a glance, of very insignificant dimensions, and embraced but a small part of the Jerusalem of this day. It was rather a castle than a town or city, and was chosen rather as a military stronghold than as a metropolis. An old ruin like Heidelburg, which once contained space enough to harbor some thousands of people, can give us a not unworthy idea of what Zion was when David conquered it.

After the young king, then a little under forty years of age, had gained possession of the Jebusite tower, the Philistines made a great bid for continued sovereignty over Israel. The taking of Jerusalem must have been a complete surprise to them, as to all the nation, for the Jebusites had such confidence in their power to hold the hill on which they lived, as to venture on the insolent step of putting blind and lame men on the walls, as a sufficient garrison. But after the gallant Joab had climbed the rocky hights and taken the place by storm, the Philistines swarmed up from their fruitful plain, bringing their idols with them, as the Israelites had once carried their ark with them, when they ventured down into the Philistine's country. Twice the Philistines assayed to take Mt. Zion, the new "City of David;" they swarmed over the valley of Rep-



HILLS AND WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

This picture gives a vivid idea of the difficulties encountered by the heroic Joab.

haim, a locality not certainly known to us, and twice they were repelled, the first time with the loss of their gods, and the second time, completely routed and broken up. All attacks on the Philistines previously to this had effected but little beyond annoying them; but this was a positive and decided victory. And yet it was not what it ought to have been. Among the few mistakes which we can see were committed by David was his stopping as he did, after merely driving the Philistines back to their own fortress; he ought to have then marched victoriously into their cities, and reduced them to subjection, and utterly broken up the nation. For Philistia was a most important part of the whole land. Lying almost contiguous to Egypt as it did, and being largely depended upon for supplies of grain when Egyptian monarchs marched into Asia for warlike purposes, it was a matter of real military necessity for the Israelites to hold that fertile region. We shall see in the sequel, when weaker men than David came to the throne, how grievous had been the oversight, in suffering the Philistines to retain a shred of their old power.

The rise of David is indicated by no surer test than the alliance which the Phœnicians now sought with him. This nation living on the western slopes of the Lebanon chain, and on the contiguous sea-shore, was one of the most powerful in the world. Tyre was to Palestine much more than Paris is to us to-day; for the difference between French art and polish and our own is not so wide as that which separated the rude people of Israel from their opulent, powerful, and civilized neighbors on the north-west. Tyre and Sidon had been great cities for centuries, and had unquestionably begun to exert a deep influence on the northern tribes. We have to deal so largely with events which cluster around Jerusalem that we fail to get any clear and full insight into the close relation between Asher, Naphtali, and Zebulun, and the Phœnician nation; but we can clearly see that a growing ease, and luxury, an increasing tendency to idolatry, among the north-

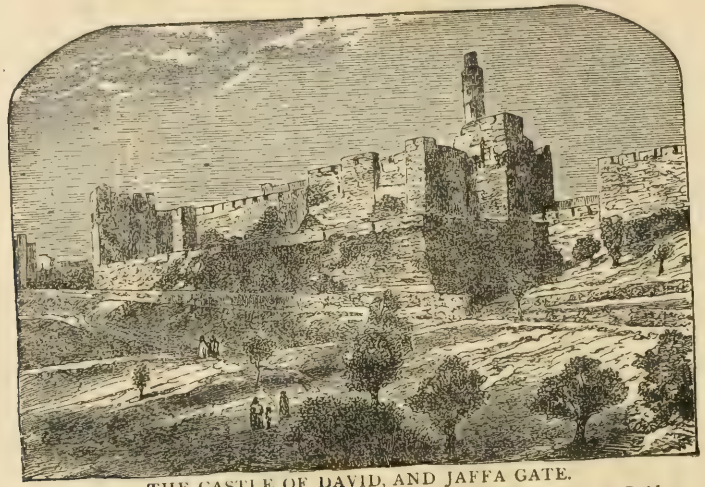
ern tribes, are a sure indication that as we are rapidly becoming Europeanized, so the northern Israelites were rapidly becoming Phœnicianized. From Hiram the king of Tyre, came by way of Joppa,*the cedars of Lebanon for a palace to be built on Mt. Zion; and with the cedars came masons and carpenters. Such artificers were unknown in Israel then, they had to come from abroad, as do our best artists in almost all departments. What kind of a "house," or palace David built for himself we can not tell; doubtless very simple and insignificant, compared with modern palaces, but an immense advance, doubtless, upon the rude simplicity of former days. But David has now taken his place among the great monarchs of the world. He has swung up into the view of the rulers of mighty empires, as Frederick the Great did when he began to attract to himself the eyes of Europe; he is, as we see him now, not a petty prince whose name was unknown even in Egypt, but a great and successful ruler, living in state, powerful in war, and more powerful in the arts of peace.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REMOVAL OF THE ARK—MILITARY CONQUESTS.

The Place where the Ark had Lain for Twenty Years—Its Removal to Gibeah—The Pomp of that Removal—The Twenty-fourth Psalm—The Acme of David's Career—David's Conquests—His Eminence as a Poet, Contrasted with his Fame as a Warrior—The Extent of David's Victories—Campaign Against the Philistines—Mistaken Policy Regarding Them—War Against Moab—Improvement on the Old Carnage of Joshua's Time—Wrong to Judge the Ethics of the Old Testament by those of the New—War Against the King of Zobah—The Riches Gained by this Campaign—The Frontier Lines as now Drawn by David—Master now of nearly all the "Promised Land"—Petra and its Subjugation—Full Description of Petra from Ritter—Subjugation of Ammon—Size of Palestine Contrasted with that of Other Great Nations of that Age.

THE next step in his career indicates the leading tendency of David's nature, and reveals the crowning act of his life. The ark, and the tabernacle, and all the sacred implements of worship had been neglected for many years, and were almost forgotten. For twenty years they had lain in the city of Kirjath-jearim, about ten miles north-west of Jerusalem; they had subsequently been removed to Gibeah, and were there when David made his preparations to remove them to his citadel. The pomp of that removal is very slightly hinted at in the narrative, as given both in II. Samuel and in I. Chronicles but it is clear that it was the supreme day and act of David's whole life. The psalms which were composed for that occasion are among the grandest in the Bible. Foremost among them is the one contained in I. Chronicles, xvii., and the noble twenty-fourth psalm. We need not recount here the ceremony of that induction; the concourse of people, the players on instruments, the king at the head, his royal mantle laid aside lest it impede his movements, and



THE CASTLE OF DAVID, AND JAFFA GATE.

From a Photograph by Rev. W. R. Bridges.

his agile body given with perfect enthusiasm to the dance, which in that day as now, was one of the highest of religious exercises. The establishing of the tabernacle in David's city may be said to be the acme of his career. True there were great triumphs after this; but the next step was a disappointment, for his desire to build a temple to his God was refused him. His son was to do what the father was not permitted to do.

We can in this place, perhaps better than elsewhere, speak of David's conquests; of those military campaigns which no doubt were the best token of his greatness in the age in which he lived. Doubtless to us, and to all who shall come after us, the most convincing proof of David's claim to be all that the Jews asserted that he was, must rest upon the wonderful character of his psalms; those immortal compositions which rose so much above the spirit of the age which produced them, that we can only account for them by granting that in some special and peculiar sense they were "inspired" by the spirit of God. Responding as they do to the religious feeling of man in every land and in every age, they compel us to admit their transcendent character; and yet to the men who lived in David's almost barbarous age, the surest token of his greatness lay in his remarkable career as a warrior.

We have already seen some tokens of his military skill in his quick and decisive victory over the rude and savage Amalekites south of Palestine, as well as in his single-handed victory over the huge Goliath, but now we see him enter upon a large field, and wage war with far more powerful enemies. Never yet had Palestine became the land which Moses and Abraham had looked forward to; that great domain which they had descried with the eye of faith, and which was to extend from the "River of Egypt" to the Euphrates, had never been subdued by Joshua or by any of the Judges, and even the rock fortress of the Jebusites, had only yielded to the powerful arm of David. The territory of the Hebrews was limited to a mere south-western corner of the domain which

had been promised by the great founders of their nation; and when David ascended the throne of Hebron, it seemed as if the promised history of the people was to be a failure. And when David took his crown, it was as master of a very insignificant tract, the petty realm of Judah in the south of Palestine; and when at last Saul's family had lost its power and place, and David had become the master of Jerusalem and the whole country from Dan to Beersheba, it was but a little part of what the king of his nation had a right to expect. He entered upon his career of conquest, therefore, with unquestioning confidence in the help of Jehovah. He felt that all the nations round about were to be subdued and the whole promised tract given to his one "peculiar people."

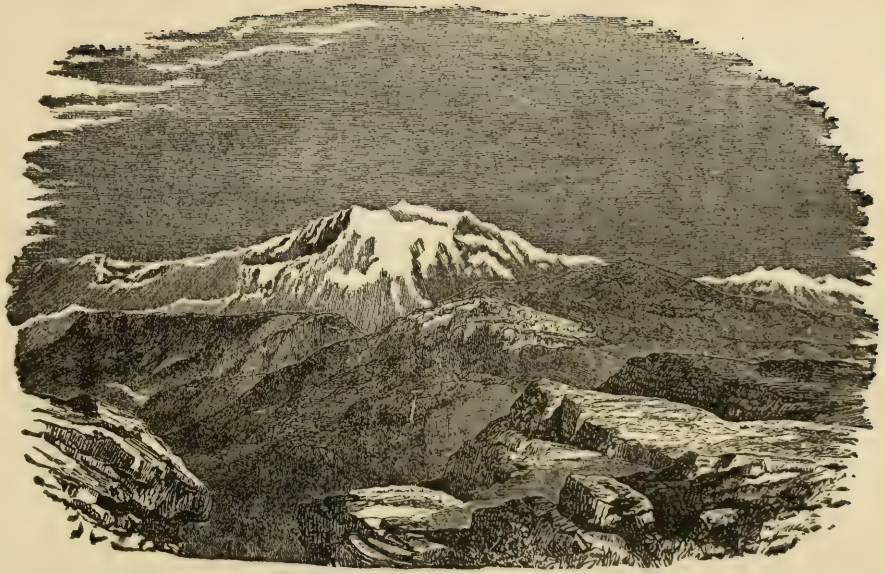
His wars opened with a speedy campaign against the Philistines, from whom he took their stronghold of Gath, the old home of Goliath, and the city with which David had already become so familiar in the days of Achish, its king. It is to be regretted as a matter of human policy that his subjection of the Philistines was not more complete than it was: for occupying the rich tract between the mountain land and Egypt, it was of the highest moment that they should not be able to give their corn to an Egyptian king who might undertake to invade Palestine. Had David made their country his in the absolute sense of the word, it would have been far different for his descendants, and the encroachments of Egypt in the time of Josiah might have never occurred. But this he did not see, and contented himself with merely making the Philistines his vassals. And this not because he was not equal to the occasion. David was equal to any work he ever undertook, but he did not see the need of thoroughly conquering Philistia, and throwing the people of his own nation into it in such a way as to reorganize its policy, and make it homogeneous with that of the hill-country.

He next turned eastward to Moab. What alienation had occurred between him and the people of his great-grandmother, the beautiful Ruth, we do not know. We saw David, at the

time of his flight before Saul, taking refuge in the land of Moab, and receiving hospitable entertainment there, but why he returned to the perils of his own country is left unexplained in the sacred record. Still there appears to be a connection between that return and his campaign against the Moabites, which was so short and decisive. We have a very scanty record of it. We only know that he "smote Moab," and destroyed two-thirds of the inhabitants with sword, saving only one-third alive. This has often, and perhaps most generally, been cited as an instance of brutal cruelty; and measured by the standard of our age it may perhaps be so regarded, but we have no right to measure David by any other standard than his own age. His sparing a full third alive was a great improvement on the old Jewish usage with regard to captives of war, whom it had been considered right to put to death without regard to age or sex. In the time of David we see that we have passed beyond the cruelty of the time of Joshua and the earlier Judges. Still we have not the slightest right to judge David by the standard of our time. There are a great many people in our time who persist in the wrong course of judging the men of the Old Testament by the ethics of the New: of supposing that they to whom it was "counted for righteousness" simply to apprehend a little of God's will and way, and follow him so far as they could see, can by any possibility be supposed to have been illumined by the clear and powerful light which Jesus brought into the world. Worse than idle are such fancies; they are the prolific mother of infidelity, and cause thousands to doubt about the truth of the Bible, who if they would but see in that Book a progressive revelation, very dim at the first, very full at the last, would find the Scriptures a great help instead of hindrance. In dealing, therefore, with David's treatment of Moab, we are not to jump at the hasty conclusion that he was wonderfully vindictive and cruel, but that he was wonderfully lenient and merciful; that oriental princes in his place have always pursued the cold-blooded policy of putting all prisoners of war to death, and that

David's sparing a full third, indicates his greater magnanimity than almost all other potentates who have been in his position.

After conquering Moab, David turned his course far to the north, and waged war against the king of Zobah. This land is not known to us in all its boundaries, but it probably extended from the northern part of the Lebanon range, thence, due eastward to the river Euphrates. Its southern boundary was contiguous to the city of Damascus; its northern boundary would probably touch a line running eastward from the city of Hamath. That it was an important kingdom, is indicated by the great wealth which accrued to David after the campaign. The horses which were gained were hamstrung, and thus rendered useless, David reserving just enough to grace his triumphal return to Jerusalem. The conquest of Zobah made him master of all the territory lying between Palestine and the Euphrates; and as his victories over the Philistines had extended his domain to the "River of Egypt," this later campaign gave him for his eastern frontier, the very river which had been promised to Abraham and Moses. On the south the natural and unchangeable boundary remained what it had been from the beginning, the limit of the great desert of the Peninsula. On only one side now did there remain a work to be done to complete the limits originally laid out. This was on the north. The source of the Jordan at the base of Hermon was now the northernmost point to which the actual power of the Israelites advanced, although it had been promised them that they should possess the territory as far northward as to the "entering in of Hamath." This included of course the beautiful and fertile valley of Cœle-Syria, lying between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges, and having its northern limit at the narrow pass where the ranges approach very closely to each other, and where lay the city of Hamath on the banks of the impetuous Orontes. This of course was the natural termination of the Cœle-Syrian valley, and as such it had been included in the original conception of Palestine, as laid down by Abraham and Moses. The king



THE GRAND RANGE OF LEBANON.
The natural, outlying limits of the "Promised Land."

of this tract who bore the name of Toi did not wait to be subjugated by David's armies, but entered into a voluntary alliance, or rather into a voluntary estate of vassalage, sending his son to Jerusalem with valuable presents of gold, silver, and brass. This made David the real master of the whole "Promised Land," with the exception of the territory of Ammon, north of Moab. Of that I will speak presently, touching first, however, upon a conquest in the far south, of a nation, remotely allied by blood to the Israelites.

The descendants of the red-haired Esau had taken possession of the mountain chain, running from the Dead Sea to the eastern arm of the Red Sea: a tract very broken, romantic, picturesque, and almost inaccessible. The capital of the nation was Petra, "the strong city," whose wonderful remains were discovered by the German-English traveler Burckhardt, early in the present century, having been for centuries lost to the knowledge of mankind. What was the occasion of the war with Edom we do not know; whether it was offensive or defensive is disputed; but at any rate it was conducted by the implacable Joab with really savage cruelty. After Petra had been stormed and taken, the Hebrew general spent no less than six months in putting the population to death, and was hardly able to bury the people as fast as they were slain. But cruel as was this campaign, it made David master of the whole territory down to the Red Sea, and prepared the way for the use which Solomon made of that important maritime thoroughfare.

So much interest hovers around the mysterious mountains of Edom, and the wonderful ruins of Petra, that I feel sure that it will greatly add to the interest and value of this work if I cite here some pages from the learned and exhaustive work of Carl Ritter on Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula.

"Before closing this account of the Sinai Peninsula, it is necessary to devote some pages to the discussion of the remarkable labyrinth of tombs in Wadi Musa, whose sculpture has retained so much of its ancient freshness, despite the vandal rudeness to which it has been subjected during the

last centuries. And yet our account must be gathered from the narratives of travelers who have been compelled, in every instance to make hasty visits, and to feel constrained on every side if they attempted to enter into a thorough investigation of the place. It is true the city has been visited by men admirably skilled in the art of observing, and it is only to be wondered that, with the limited time at their disposal, they have succeeded so well as they have in depicting the place and its monuments; and yet up to the present time no plan has been drawn up of the city, no topographical survey made, and no detailed description given of the topography of the region; even those which have been given us contradict each other often, or are highly incomplete. Yet there is no lack of artistic material to illustrate the remarkable architecture of Petra. Of these, Laborde's classic work, the *Voyage de l' Arabie Pétrée*, is one of the most celebrated; yet it is in a manner vitiated by the sacrifice of truth to artistic effect. In all that relates to architecture and to the surrounding mountains, Mr. Robert's work* is to be called a masterpiece, uniting tone with beauty to a very high degree; nor are Bartlett's Sketches† devoid of elegance, or incapable of affording authentic information regarding the scenery of Petra.

And yet, while we must confess that, since Burckhardt's discovery of these ruins, very much has been done towards the work of exploring them and ascertaining their character, it must be acknowledged that much still remains to be done. But this can not be attempted till the region in which Petra lies shall be brought under control, and the wild hordes which make it so dangerous to travelers shall be reduced to subjection. In view of the disturbed state of the region, since the time of its discovery, our obligations to the travelers who have penetrated it can not be too thankfully expressed.

Burckhardt‡ was only able to reach Petra clad in rags, and

* David Roberts, *Views in the Holy Land*, London, 1842–6.

† W. H. Bartlett, *The Christian in Palestine*, or *Scenes of Sacred History;* with explanatory descriptions by H. Stebbing, London. ‡ Burckhardt, *Travels* p. 433.

could make a stay of merely twenty-four hours there, exposed all that time to suspicion if he made any inquiries, or manifested any curiosity. Laborde * remained eight days in Petra; but although able to make his sketches in that time, he was compelled to fly before he felt that he was prepared to go. Bankes, Irby, and Mangles † could spend but two days there; and just after they had found how much remained to be discovered, they were compelled to leave the spot. Lord Lindsay ‡ could spend but a few hours at Petra, for fear of his life; Von Schubert did not dare to pass twenty-four hours there, nor did Robinson venture to tarry longer than a day. Lord Prudhoe tarried but a night at Wadi Musa; Kinnear and Roberts spent several days there, but were repeatedly robbed, and compelled to fly sooner than they wished.

The fear of incurring the vengeance of Mohammed Ali was for a long time powerful in keeping the savage Arabs of this region in check; but an expedition of his being once sent against them, proved itself utterly unable to cope with them, and withdrew, leaving them masters of the ground. Each night the Arabs came out from their hiding-places, and stole the arms and the valuables of the Egyptians, and withdrew before they could be discovered. Nor was it possible to follow them into their rock-bound retreats. The result was, that the Arabs have become more emboldened than ever, and the difficulties in the way of examining Petra have been largely increased.§

The Entrance to Petra from the East by the Wadi es Syk.

Burckhardt, the discoverer of Petra, entered the city by the eastern route, the avenue which even to the present day is

* L. de Laborde, *Voy. de l'Arabie Pétrée* p. 60.

† Irby and Mangles, *Trav.* pp. 440 to 442.

‡ Lord Lindsay, *Letters* pp. 30, 40 *et seq.*

§ Of late the dangers and difficulties have so much increased, that within the last few years Stanley's party is almost the only one which has reached this celebrated place. The authorities which Ritter quotes remain (with Stanley's qualifications,) the only authentic guides to this region.—Ed.

the most imposing feature of the place. Passing the source of the brook which watered the ancient capital, he followed the stream as it winds past the Arab village of Eljy, and soon after entered the Wadi es Syk. Not long after he passed three tombs on the right, and one on the left, which is ornamented with four slight pyramids or obelisks. These are mentioned by Robinson. Passing on through the ravine, he was surprised at discovering a fine arch held by Letronne* to be the remains of a former gate to the city. This spanned the whole gorge, and greatly impressed Burckhardt with the elegance which it displayed in its construction, and the admirable manner in which it had been preserved. Robinson was able to examine it more at length and has given us some details regarding it. The arch spans the entire gorge, and at each extremity is decorated with pillars, between which are niches in the wall, apparently for the reception of statues. It presents the appearance of a triumphal arch, according to both Robinson and Laborde,† and forms a truly imposing portal to the wonders of Petra. The width of the gorge is here but about twelve feet, and nowhere throughout the whole avenue is it more than three or four times that width. From the arch onwards there is a constant succession of inscriptions, tombs, niches, and traces of aqueducts, once intended, doubtless, to convey the waters of the brook. On both sides the walls rise to a great height, ranging from eighty to two hundred and fifty feet; yet owing to the narrowness of the gorge, most travelers have over-rated the altitude of the sides, one writer having gone so far as to state that they are a thousand feet high. Through this gorge the brook flows, watering a thick growth of oleanders by the way, while wild figs and tamarisks spring from clefts in the walls, and ivy droops in graceful festoons from the cliffs. The winding cleft, which owes its origin apparently to volcanic action, has been widened in some places, and beautified everywhere by art, and

*Letronne in *Journ des Savans*, i. p., 534.

†"*Arc de Triomphe*," Petra, in *Voy de l'Arabie pétrée*.

has become one of the most romantic and one of the most remarkable rock-galleries on the earth. Aloft the wild fig trees can be seen swayed to and fro by the wind, while below, in the deep shade, absolute silence reigns.*

As the brook which runs through this gorge was of the utmost importance to the welfare of the ancient inhabitants of this ancient Nabathæan capital, the greatest pains were taken to regulate and direct the supply of water. Its bed appears to have been entirely walled up, and even arched over for a part of the way, in order to make the approach to the city more stately, and at the same time more convenient for the crowds of caravans which streamed to Petra at the time of its power and pride. Stone-walls are even now to be seen not only in the Sik avenue, but after the city has been reached, which once served to direct the course of the stream, and to break its force. Besides this, on both sides of the gorge, channels † seem to have been cut at a higher level than the true bed, to supply the place with water at all seasons, and to prevent the absorption of water, during the summer season, in the ground.

All the varied remains which decorate the place, the niches, the polished tablets, the excavations, the busts and mutilated statues, the traces of inscriptions—show what value the ancient Nabathæan capital placed upon the noble and unique avenue through which it is approached. It is no matter for wonder that the Bedouins ascribe this all to the work of demons, and believe that the place is a secret repository of untold treasures.

After forty minutes' walk through the continually changing scenes of this wonderful yet beautiful chasm, for whose decoration, as Roberts, the artist remarks, a whole race of sculptors must have been required, and after passing other fissures which lead into it, which have not yet been explored, the gorge deepens still more than before, and bends sharply towards the north-west, at once opening upon a new and striking scene.

* J. Kinnear, *Cairo, Petra, etc.*, p. 139.

† Burckhardt, *Trav.* p, 423.

At the angle and confronting the grand approach, stands the gorgeous façade of the chief structure of Petra—the Khasneh, or Treasury.

All travelers agree that the first view of this structure is one of the most imposing that they have ever seen; it seems, appearing in this wild and savage desert, like the work of fairy hands alone; it is moreover, perhaps the best preserved work that has come down to us from antiquity. Even the careful Robinson does not hesitate to speak as strongly as Lord Lindsay, and to declare that the first impression was more overpowering to him than all that he had seen in Rome, Athens, or Thebes; that in picturesqueness of situation, fineness and exactness in the use of the chisel, elegance and symmetry in the combination of the parts, and harmony in the whole, the structure is unique in its perfection, even if there be not perfect purity in the style in which it is executed. The beautiful rosy color of the sandstone, when lighted up by the rays of the morning sun, all unite in asserting, contributes no little share towards the general effect*; and the situation, Bankes, a most competent judge, declares to be the finest conceivable. Burckhardt, pronounces it to be a work of immense labor, being made not out of separate blocks of stone, but the whole structure, from the apex to the base, being hewn out of the solid sandstone rock of which it forms a part. Owing to the peculiar dryness of the climate, it has undergone the least possible injury from the weather, and stands almost as perfect as when it came from the hand of the artist. Laborde speaks of it as the most colossal relief existing, in which symmetry, art, and elegance are united in the most striking contrast with the surrounding wildness of nature. It stands as if in a colossal niche, surmounted so perfectly by

*The reader will remember that Stanley carefully, yet delicately, tones down what the older travelers have written regarding the colors at Petra. He admits their gorgeousness, though he protests their being supposed so conspicuous and glaring as they have been too often represented. It is possible that he may have gone with expectations too highly raised, the earlier visitors not enough so, and that both were equally surprised.—Ed.

the overhanging stone, as to protect it entirely from the action of storms.

Built in the form of a temple façade, and with a front resting upon four columns, all upon the largest and most admirable scale, the main interior apartment is a room merely sixteen paces square, and twenty-five feet high, the whole being excavated out of the solid rock. All the walls are smooth, and destitute of ornament, not only in this main chamber, but in the three minor ones, which lie at the sides and farther back, and which, as they are lighted only from the front, and have but a single entrance, appear to have been used as tombs. In the two side rooms which flank the main portal, the same naked simplicity prevails. The main entrance passes beneath this portal, which is nobly ornamented on the exterior, by an ascent of five high steps; and the façade on each side of the pillars of the portico is profusely ornamented with figures whose original meaning is in great part lost, as they have been injured probably by Moslems. Those which are higher up remain almost intact.

The four main pillars of the front, of which only one is broken, are each three feet in diameter, and rise to a height of thirty-five feet, terminating in fine Corinthian capitals. The entire front rises twice as high as the pillars, Burckhardt estimating it at sixty-five feet, while Robinson set it at a hundred, and Laborde at a hundred and twenty. Far above the lower story there rises a second, with an unbroken achitrave which rests upon pillars, above the top of which the gables approach; and the whole is crowned with a slender, round, temple-like tower, closing with a cupola and an immense stone urn. All the niches, and the walls of the upper portion are filled with representations of female figures, two of which are winged, while the gable end is decorated with Roman eagles, more or less mutilated. The urn which crowns the whole is the object of the Bedouin's greatest greed, and it has been the mark of countless arrow-shots, the Arabs believing that in this urn Pharaoh concealed his treasures, (hence the name

Khasneh Faroun.) It has not been broken, however, and every Arab discharges his shot at it and turns away grumbling about the great giant Faroun, who has put his treasures beyond reach. To climb to that height would be a task which not even Bedouins would dare attempt.

Travelers have perplexed themselves with the question why this structure was built, and what purpose it subserved. Even the conjecture that it was a place of sepulture does not satisfy all minds; for it is in striking contrast with the catacombs of Egypt, whose interior, instead of being left naked and desolate, was most richly adorned. The theory has been advanced that it was a temple, and yet Bankes remarks that none of the figures carved upon it suggest that any divine attributes were ascribed to them. No conjecture has been made which seems tenable. Nor is the time when it was constructed beyond doubt. Bankes drew the conclusion from the Roman eagles, and the general style of the architecture, that it dates from the epoch of Trajan, whose taste ran so strongly in this direction. Schubert thought that it was built even subsequently to that epoch, and concluded that it was left in an incomplete state. Roberts, whose judgment is very valuable, does not pronounce upon the date of the structure, but thinks that it was a comparatively small object to care for the interior; that the whole researches of the artist were called into requisition to give the exterior an imposing effect, and to this everything else is sacrificed. Roberts pays the strongest tribute to the purity of the style, the elegance and symmetry of the façade, and beauty of the coloring, yet not even he is able to conjecture satisfactorily what purpose the whole was intended to serve.

A broad area before the Khasneh, fifty paces wide and three times as broad, ends at the south in a steep crag: northward, it opens out into a still broader fissure, which extends on for several hundred paces, with tombs on both sides. On the left the rock amphitheater comes suddenly into view, its seats and arena being in a perfect state of preservation. It is

only after reaching that spot that there is a full prospect over the whole city, with its thousands of tombs. In many places they rise one above another from the bottom to the very top of the cliffs, and the highest and smallest ones look not unlike the houses of swallows and doves. They may be seen everywhere;* not only in the main fissure where the city proper is, but in all the subordinate wadis or seams which enter the main one on every side. The Syk is but one out of many approaches, although the largest, the most profusely decorated, and the most imposing. They show, although but few of them have as yet been explored, that the population of Petra must have been very large.

Burckhardt noticed that the tombs on the way from the Khasneh to the amphitheater, on both sides of the gorge, were generally high façades with a flat roof, but sometimes attaining a collossal size. They often have several small, and sometimes tolerably large, inner apartments, like the Khasneh; but in all cases, as there, these rooms are naked and devoid of all ornament. They could, he thinks, have served no other purpose than the reception of the dead. In one he counted twelve of these rooms, seemingly the possession of a numerous family. Many of the more simple tombs present the appearance of truncated pyramids, with two pilasters at the side, and with the entrance in the middle, reminding one of the Palmyra tombs; yet differing from them in this respect, that at Petra they are cut from the primitive rock, while at Palmyra they are made of separate stones. This is due to the nature of the place, and finds its parallel in the sandstone structures of Egypt, some of the marble ones of Greece, as well as some in India, which are hewn out of a single rock. Where the cliffs are high enough to permit it, these tombs rise one above another, as I have already remarked. The openings to them are generally filled with sand and rubbish, and

* Stanley says, however, that in the most populous part that he could select, he could number up in one view no more than fifty, and generally much fewer. Yet he admits that the aggregate number is very large.—Ed.

very few have as yet been examined. The variety in the forms of the tombs is very great, owing to the fact that it has been necessary to adapt them to the peculiarities of the different parts of the rock where they have been excavated; indeed, it has been said that no two can be found which are precisely alike. It is impossible, therefore, to speak of a common architectural style, although the whole can be summed up as one great Necropolis.

The theater, wholly hewn out of rock,* has thirty-three rows of benches, each one of which is capable of accommodating a hundred persons. This makes the entire capacity to have been about three thousand sittings. It does not differ from other works of the same class, excepting in this, that above the uppermost rows of seats, and in the cliffs on both sides, there are the same tombs which fill the remainder of the valley. The place built for mirth is brought into the closest proximity with the high places of death, and thoughts of sport alternated with those of eternity. The eye of the spectator wandered from the scene where pleasure presided, to those which testified of grief; and never has there been known a place where such a contrast as this has been displayed, for even Paris places the burial-places of her dead without her walls, and other places have made them the companions of churches. The decoration of these tombs, as well as of the others, indicates the prominent part which vanity played at Petra, as well as at other places. It is impossible to assign any authentic date to the construction of the theater. It may be a monument of the time of Hadrian, or, as some think, still more recent; but whenever it was constructed, it is a work which contrasts strongly in respect of size with the titanic vastness of the objects around it. So grand is the scale of all the objects around, so peculiar the architecture, and so rich the colors displayed on every hand, that the theater sinks into insignificance. In the diversity of architectural forms which are found, there are the representatives

* Von Schubert, ii. p. 428.



PETRA.

"Though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord," Jer. xlix. Among the various views of Petra, heretofore published, this is the most truthful and excellent.

From an Original Photograph in the possession of the Author

of all ages, and artists of all tendencies appear to have free scope to work out their various fancies. Here are found traces of the ancient architecture of the place which is referred to by Jeremiah (xlix. 16): 'Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thy heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the hight of the hill; though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Also Edom shall be a desolation;' and by Obadiah (3 and 4): 'The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, though thou dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?' and from that time, down to the epoch when the commerce of the Nabathæans with Babylon, Tadmor, Egypt, and the shores of the Mediterranean, introduced the Egyptian pyramidal, and the Syrian styles, as well as those of Greece and Rome. Tasteless though grandiose tombs are to be seen there, which owe their origin to the epoch between Hadrian and Antonius; and even the rise of Christianity finds its witness there, some of the ancient halls having evidently been transformed into churches. All these things bear witness to the influence of many different nations upon this rich and commercial Nabathæan people, which reached out its arms to the ends of the earth.

The broad space which comes into view when one has advanced as far as the amphitheater, is not a true valley, as Pliny termed it, nor a plain, as Strabo asserted, but a deep rolling tract shut in by the crags, and with two prominent knolls or hills, occupying the central part. These hills were once covered with edifices, as the immense masses of rubbish, and hewn stones of every size and form, still show. Here was unquestionably the *city of the living*, surrounded on every side by the city of the dead.

The brook continues its north-westerly course through this rolling tract, and between these hills, here and there disappearing beneath the rubbish, and then appearing anon. For a considerable part of the way, this brook appears to have

been arched over, as at Philadelphia and other cities. Robinson discovered several remains of bridges which once passed over it, and traces of paved paths or roads which once ran along its side. In the low grounds upon the left bank of this stream, ruins are still to be seen, which appear to have once belonged to the most important building in Petra. These ruins are sufficient to show that the opulence of this old Nabathæan capital did not consist solely in magnificently decorating the abodes of its dead. Laborde has given among his thirty beautiful views of the architectural remains of Petra, four of those which are found in this spot, two of which he conceived to have been a temple, and two others a triumphal arch. Their exact purpose is not known with certainty; yet the richness of their decorations, although belonging to a late and sunken period of art, reminds one of the splended structures of Palmyra and Baalbec. Their pillars, portals, triglyphs, friezes, and festoons of flowers, are like those wrought in the Syrian Decapolis in the third and fourth centuries. The temple called by the Bedouins, Serai Farouns, is the only structure still standing which is at all complete, and which stands without any support from the crags around. Burckhardt heard this place called the Kaszr Bent Faroun, or the Palace of Pharaoh's daughter. He was very anxious to visit it, but the suspicions of his guides were aroused, that his object was to secure buried treasure, and he was unable to enter it. He discovered, however, on the same side of the brook, which he says pursues a subterranean course here of a quarter of an hour's distance, a solitary pillar thirty feet in height, and composed of a dozen pieces of stone. It was called Zob Faroun, (*hasta virilis Pharaonis.*) Laborde has given a view of it. According to Robinson, it forms a part of a temple, whose broken columns and fragments strew the earth around.

The main ruins, which lie on the left bank of the brook, have been largely washed away and undermined by the brook at its times of flood; and the water may be seen here and there standing in pools, which are in some cases surrounded

by masses of rubbish, towering high up the sides of the cliffs. These have not yet been examined and described with any minuteness. On the right side of the brook there is another mass of ruins, but the original forms, of which they once formed a part, are more indistinguishable than those on the eastern side. It is still manifest, however, that it was on this side that the main body of the city lay, and that, extending a good way northward as it did, its area could scarcely have been less than an hour's circuit. On the east side of the brook the tombs still continue, cut out of the sides of the crags; in one place Burckhardt counted fifty of these ranged side by side. He remarks, moreover, that the finest sepulchres in Wadi Musa, are in the eastern cliff, and that high up he noticed one large tomb with Corinthian pilasters. Laborde has given views of some of the most remarkable sepulchres on this side; and Irby and Mangles have described some of them in considerable detail. One of these, perhaps the largest, is three stories in height, the lower one of which is entered by four portals. The two upper stories are ornamented with eighteen Ionic pillars each, while a part of the structure, which once evidently towered above the crag, was made of hewn stones, but had fallen into ruin. In the interior they discovered apartments furnished with marble, and bearing the traces of luxury. Another Mausoleum, seventy or eighty feet in height, and of great extent, having a central part and two wings, the whole hewn out of the rock, and provided even with cellars, is remarkable not only for the number and size of its apartments, but also from the fact that it bears traces of having been transferred from its original purpose into a Christian church, the only monument of its kind in the entire city. In three niches yet to be seen are remains of altars; the places where tapestry and pictures were suspended are to be seen on the walls; and in one corner is an inscription executed in red, giving the date when the place was consecrated. Unfortunately the latter is one of the interesting facts which Mr. Bankes' refusal to publish the results of his explorations withholds from the world.

The western wall of the Wadi is higher than the eastern, attaining an altitude of three or four hundred feet; and from the bottom to the top it is perforated with tombs, although they are not so elaborately constructed or so numerous as in the eastern cliff. This part was therefore considered by Irby and Mangles as a kind of suburb of the place. On this side lies the unfinished tomb, copied by Laborde, in which it is perfectly easy to see that the method of working pursued by the Nabathæan architects was to smooth the face of the rock, and then to commence at the top and to work downward, first executing the roof, then the frieze, then the capitals of the pillars, then the pillars themselves, and so on till the whole work was finished. This explains the circumstance, that so many tombs which are elaborately wrought in the upper part, have been left in a rude state below; for the scale laid out may have been necessarily abandoned, in consequence of the failure of the means which had been reckoned upon at the outset. This, too, solves a mystery which perplexed Mr. Bankes, namely, that in some cases the façade is wrought in one architectural style in the upper story, while the lower one is in another. Laborde noticed the same fact, and was perplexed by it. But the union, not only of the various Greek orders of architecture in the same structure, but of others, even of the Egyptian and other oriental styles, shows that in those instances the time of building was not confined to a few years, but was distributed over many; and that the thread which was dropped by the older architects was taken up by the subsequent ones, until the whole work was completed. Sometimes, too, there is great irregularity in the exterior appearance of the structure; and where this is the case, and pillars and doors have been set in such fanciful positions as to mar the architectural effect, it has been found owing to some necessity growing from the configuration of the apartments within.

Most of these structures in the rock walls which surround Petra were unquestionably intended to serve as tombs, but Bankes satisfied himself that there were exceptions to this. In

one he discovered four front windows, and a hall sixty feet long, and of proportionate breadth and height, which had evidently been built to serve as a dwelling. It differed from the tombs, however, in the entire absence of ornament in the exterior. Nor was this the only instance of the kind. The entrance to this house was not from the level ground, but from a projecting ledge of rock, recalling the words of Isaiah, xxii. 16: 'What hast thou here, and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock.' It remains up to the present day a mystery how the people who inhabited those lofty abodes were able to reach them; and Schubert in his perplexity asks, 'Did the builders of those places have wings like the eagle, to enable them to soar to those lofty heights?'

Robinson who followed the course of the brook down to this point, says that the water was not abundant, but excellent. It flows westward from this spot, entering a gorge which resembles in general character the Syk, but which is broader and more irregular in shape than that. The brook is so thickly shaded with oleanders that it is difficult to follow its course. The walls of this gorge are also full of tombs, but they are smaller than the others and destitute of external decorations. A high rock on the left Laborde held to be the Acropolis of Petra, though Robinson doubts it: Irby and Mangles make no allusion to it. Formy who visited Petra in 1840, is the only traveler who has made any detailed allusions to it; and his narrative is so confused and inexact as to be of much less value than could be wished. He has, however, brought some interesting facts to light. He alludes to a tomb there as being the only one which he saw whose interior is ornamented. Laborde speaks of it as now used mainly by the herdsmen as a sheep-fold. From this spot Formy climbed to an adjacent elevation, on which he found a cistern constructed with excellent cement, and a little way higher two bastions with walls in a state of ruin: what purpose they had served remained a

mystery to him. South of this species of fort he came to a platform hewn out of the rock, sustaining two stone obelisks, bearing the name Zob Faroun, which seemed to be applied with a different meaning than to the pillar of which Burckhardt speaks under the same name. Every step which he took from that spot to his tent, revealed to him new winding stairs and paths in the rock, with traces here and there of gardens which he thinks must at one time have imparted a paradisaical air to the place.

Robinson sought to find an opening in the narrow gorge running westward which would lead him to the ruin called the Deir. He found many narrow wadis, but they did not guide him to the object of his search; and the shepherds assured him that it is inaccessible from this point. Farther west the gorge has never been penetrated, and not even the Arab guides could tell in what direction the waters of the brook force their way through the mountains. Yet Robinson satisfied himself that Wadi Musa does not run under this name into the great Araba, and that the course which Laborde has given on his map has no real existence. Irby and Mangles followed the course of the brook but for a little distance, but long enough to be filled with surprise at the profuse luxuriance of the oleander thickets which follow its course, as well as at the other growths which accompany it. They discovered carobs, figs, mulberries, grapes, pomegranates, and a beautiful variety of aloe. In this neighborhood, too, there was no lack of sculptured recesses in the rock walls, although they were often low and irregular. The skill displayed here was far inferior to that seen in other parts of Petra.

Above the rubbish heaps of the ruined city, and above the colossal walls which hem it in, rises the lofty double peak of Hor, towering up in solitude, a jagged, massive, and naked mass of rock. It was Burckhardt's wish to ascend to the summit; but this he was unable to accomplish, and only succeeded in reaching a platform from which the traditional tomb of Aaron can be seen. Here his Arab companions offered a

sheep, in sacrifice to the great high priest. They soon withdrew again, to the valley below, with the more satisfaction to Burckhardt, as he heard from the Arabs that the tomb above contained nothing whatever which would repay him for the toil of ascending the mountain farther. He afterwards regretted not making the effort, as he heard that within the tomb are three interesting copper vessels which were once in use in sacrificing. No subsequent traveler has confirmed the existence of these copper vessels, and it seems probable that Burckhardt was incorrectly informed.

The first Europeans who reached the summit, and visited the so-called tomb of Aaron, were Bankes, and his companions, Irby and Mangles.* They describe the ascent as very difficult, although there were many places where the path had been smoothed away apparently for the accommodation of the great numbers of pilgrims who ascended it. The time required to reach the top was an hour. The rocks were not entirely destitute of verdure; and even at the summit the travelers found some shrubs which were new to them, particularly some thorny ones, and an unknown kind of juniper.

The building which bears the name of Aaron's tomb does not differ at all from the ordinary structures which cover the remains of the Arab sheikhs, and holy men. It is apparently composed, in part at least, of fragments of stone which had been used in a previous structure on the same spot. At present the only noticeable objects in the building are some rags, bits of yarn, false pearls and para coins, all of the least possible value. Some steps below the chapel there is an arched vault, in whose rear there is a couple of chains, which guard the entrance to what purports to be the real burial-place of the saint; the door is also guarded with a ragged cloth. The dim light of the lamp did not allow many objects to be seen; and as the travelers were obliged to enter the place barefoot, on account of its reputed sanctity, they did not remain within it long, but soon withdrew, for fear of snakes or scorpions. The

* Irby and Mangles, pp. 433–439; Legh, pp. 230–232.

view in all directions from the summit of Mount Hor is very extensive and grand, although very few of the details which make it up are known by name, and the distance is too great to distinguish many of the objects in the range of vision. Still we cannot wholly pass over a prospect so interesting. From the southern shores of the Dead Sea a chain of mountains may be seen, extending far away into the south, but diminishing in hight, until in the distant horizon they seem to be unimportant hills. Legh insists that from the summit of Hor he distinctly discerned Mount Sinai. At the foot, the long, sandy plain of the Araba can be traced, its surface seamed with the courses of wadis and brooks, and as it nears the immediate base, displaying scattered hills, which in their isolation have the appearance of islands. Towards the south-west the sight wanders away indefinitely, without falling upon any prominent object. Towards the south-east the vision is bounded by the near Arabian chain, and from that the eye comes back to Hor itself, with its steep, jagged sides, its gorges and precipices, and its labyrinthine valleys. The most striking single object to be discerned from the summit, is the colossal structure known as the ed-Deir, or the convent. It is in a north-easterly direction from the tomb of Aaron, and even there is seen to be larger than the Khasneh, although of similar style; and, like that, it is crowned with a colossal urn. Petra is entirely concealed from view as one stands on the summit of Hor.

Laborde* is the first European traveler who has succeeded in reaching the Deir. The way is an intricate one, and can not be found without a guide. The ascent from the valley is rapid and steep, and the brooks fall in pleasant little cascades, as they find their way down to the bottom. Later travelers estimate the entire altitude of the "Convent" as about a thousand feet above Wadi Musa. The building, although

*Laborde, Voy. p. 59, and *Plan de la ville de Petra et de ses environs, levésur les lieux*, p. L. de Laborde; Irby and Mangles, *Sketch of the ground plan of Petra* in *Trav.* p. 419.



THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT HOR.

colossal in proportions is executed in the debased style of the third and fourth centuries, and recalls to one's mind the decline of the *renaissance* style of the fifteenth. The general appearance is similar to the Khasneh, there being two stories, with colonnades and pilasters, ten below and six above. There is less detail in the finish and all is more coarsely executed,—a deficiency which was explained away by subsequent travelers, however, who showed the structure had never been brought to a state of completion.

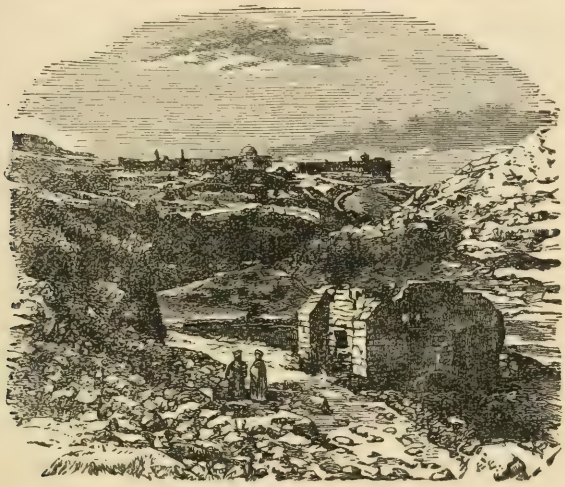
Robinson subsequently visited ed-Deir, and has left a good account of it, and of its general situation. From the steps, Mount Hor can be seen at the south-west, throned in solitary majesty, while the eye runs far away over the savage sandstone crags, and down the steep defile which forms the ascent. The building itself, despite its overladen style, makes a very strong impression upon the mind. That it is now only a part of what it once was, is shown by the stairways which are seen in the neighborhood, the tombs near by, and the ruins of a palace just confronting it. The latter was not visited till Roberts and Kinnear explored the place thoroughly. The interior of ed-Deir, like that of the Khasneh does not correspond to its exterior richness; Robinson saw nothing but a bare room hewn out of the rock, and in the rear a recess slightly elevated, and approached by flights of steps at the ends,—an arrangement which reminded him of the altars in many Greek churches. He thought he also saw traces indicating that a curtain had once hung there; and the impression was strongly made on his mind, that the place was originally erected as a heathen temple, but had been converted into a Christian church. Roberts the distinguished artist, who subsequently visited the place and sketched it, was made more certain, if possible, than Robinson had been: he discovered a cross painted on the wall in the rear of the altar. The dimensions of the main apartment are fifty feet by fifty, and thirty high. The elevation of the urn is thought by the latest travelers to be a hundred feet higher than that of el-Khazneh. Roberts was the



AMMAN, GENERAL VIEW WITH STREAM AND BRIDGE.

first to discover that the rudeness of the architecture, which had been spoken of by Laborde and Robinson, results from the fact that the work was never completed. It is a work so modern in its date, that many of the capitals of the columns and other architectural details have never been begun."

There remained the territory of Ammon north of Moab. The Ammonites were a fierce, a powerful, and had now grown to be a rich nation, and it was important to utterly break them



WELL OF JOAB.

This well which lies near the lower extremity of the Valley of Jehoshaphat bears the name of Joab. It is often improperly called the Well of Job.

From a Photograph by Frith.

down. The conflict with Zobah had been prefaced by a preliminary war with the Ammonites, but the real struggle was to come now at the close of David's campaigns. The stronghold of the tribe was at Rabbath Ammon, a place about twenty miles east of the Jordan, and bearing at the present day the name of Amman. It was divided into two parts, an upper and a lower town. The lower was well supplied with water from a profuse spring and brook. The upper town was dependent upon the lower, and if the latter should be taken and the sup-

ply of water cut off, the former must inevitably fall. To the capture of Rabbath Ammon, Joab was sent, David remaining self-indulgently in Jerusalem. Under the masterly generalship of Joab, the lower city at length yielded, and the commander sent back word to the king, that if he would have the glory of taking the city he must come over and be present in person when the upper tower should surrender. Although the real contest was past, and what remained was purely a work of pageantry, David went and was present when the city capitulated, and had the sole glory of the conquest.

And thus ended the wars of David. I have but touched upon them; with less completeness even than the Bible gives the account; but there is little doubt that were the story of David's military exploits fully told, his name would stand by the side of the greatest generals. The narrative we find in the Bible is a mere outline; and the means of filling it in have now all passed away. Yet the change which David wrought in the extent of his domain show how great a conqueror he was. Egypt then had an area of only ten thousand square miles; Assyria, that great empire whose name is so conspicuous, reached but eighty thousand square miles; but the empire of Israel under David, touched no less a figure than sixty thousand square miles; an extent six times as great as was that of Egypt. It was a wonderful change, and shows the power of no ordinary man. It is very clear that David was encountered by very formidable combinations of armies, and by a most lavish use of resources; yet the vigor and merit, and above all, the trust which he had in God, were so remarkable, that he swept on without any hindrance, to the accomplishment of his vast designs.

CHAPTER XIX.

DAVID'S SIN—ABSALOM'S REVOLT.

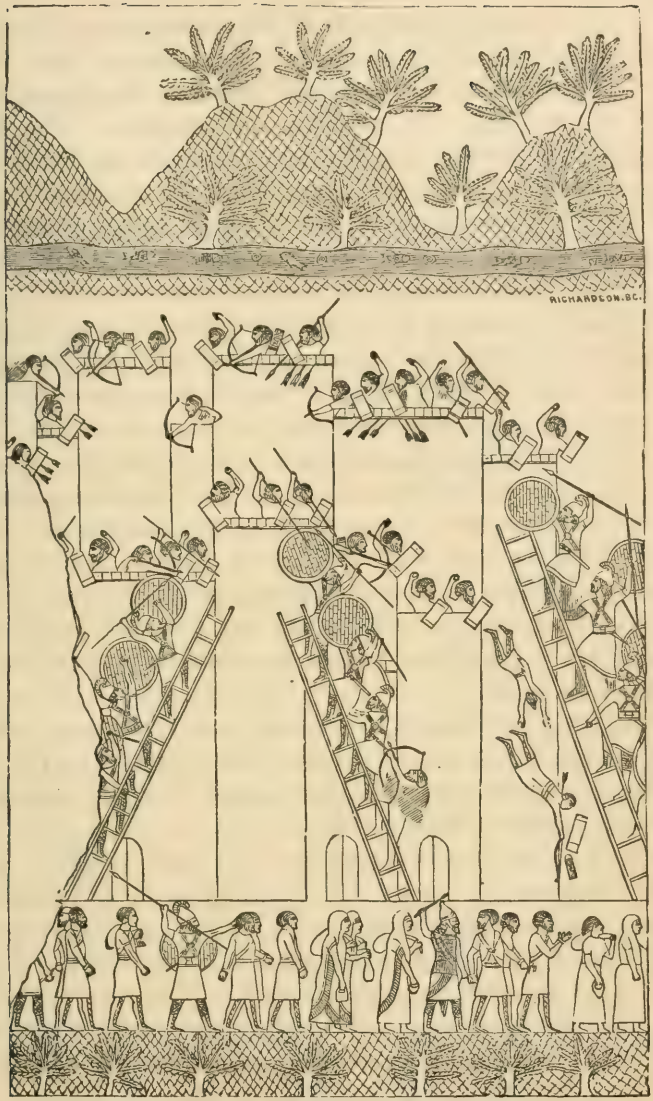
The Fall of David—A Turning-point in His Life—Bathsheba Descried from the Palace—Her Husband a Foreigner—Uriah's Wonderful Fidelity—David's Sin must not be Measured by the Standard of Our Day—The Fifty-first Psalm—An Autobiographical Confession—David's Star on the Wane—The Story of Absalom Minutely Told in the Bible—Stanley's Account—Absalom's Beauty—Eastern Family Customs—David's Love for Absalom—The Flight of the King—The Insults which were Offered Him—Ahithopel's Counsel—The Psalms which Grew Out of this Event—David in Security East of the Jordan—Death of Absalom—Effect on the King—David's Return.

IT was while he was engaged in the siege of Rabbath Ammon, through his deputy Joab, that the moral fall of David occurred, that great catastrophe which proved to be a turning-point in his life. The triumphant entry into Jerusalem with the ark, was the event which signalizes his reaching the height of his career, and during the long course of his wars, he did not leave the pinnacle of greatness to which he had risen. But the plunge down was sudden and decisive. He never rose from it, and it involved the loss of all he held dear. From the roof of his palace on Mt. Zion, he beheld the form of a very beautiful woman, who on inquiry, he found bore the name of Bathsheba, and who was the wife of one of the leading officers in David's army. Her husband was not of Israelite birth, but was connected by lineage with one of the conquered tribes of the land, the same Hittites of whom Abraham had in a far earlier age bought the cave of Machpelah. Uriah was then away with the army, engaged in the siege of Rabbath Ammon. The wife yielded to David's guilty passion, and became with child. The King,

anxious to hide the parentage of the infant, when it should be born, sent to Uriah, and gave him a furlough. But nothing would induce the brave soldier to sleep at his own house. He felt that while in the King's service he must sleep at the palace; and although David sought to break him down with wine, and in other ways to place him where he might yield to domestic indulgence, it was all in vain. Finding that Uriah's simple and stern fidelity was obstinately in his way, he sent the soldier back to Joab, with a sealed letter, commanding that the bearer be exposed at an advanced post where he must inevitably fall. The ruse was successful. Joab gave Uriah the command of a body which was to come close to the walls of the besieged city; an arrow came down from above, and the noble man fell. Everything about Uriah is noble and disinterested; everything about Bathsheba is selfish, self-indulgent, and wicked. The result of the base intrigue was that after a month of formal mourning, the woman went to the palace as David's wife, and became the mother of a child which never lived to grow up.

The fall of David was a very great one, but it should not be measured with the stern severity with which it would be condemned in our time, and with the light of our day. Still it needed only the faithful dealing of Nathan to lead him to see the degradation into which he had fallen, and to wring from him that wonderful fifty-first Psalm. He had fallen, not with one single act of sin and shame, but into a complex of dastardly and infamous acts; but he was not to stay there. His better nature leaped up when it was touched by the tender and faithful words of Nathan; and to the stern "Thou art the man," there went forth in answer the sorrowful and plaintive "I have sinned."

The fifty-first Psalm stands easily the first of all the strains of David. For in it he has expressed the language of contrition for every man and every age. His own great soul, trembling with a sense of sin and shame, clove a way to the throne of God, through which all sinners have always loved



ANCIENT WAR.

A city taken by assault, and the inhabitants led away captive. From *Kouyunjik*. - (Layard's *Nineveh*, ii., 285.)

to come; and under the sense of just condemnation there was revealed to him a sense of the love and mercy of God, which convinced him that he must find grace at the throne, when coming with such sorrow and such contrition. The whole Psalm is autobiographical, as is the thirty-second, which is assigned to the same epoch. In the fifty-first, he seeks a shelter, and cries for pardon; in the thirty-second he finds it and rests tranquilly on the bosom of the Father.

After the period of David's adultery we discover that his star is on the wane. The whole closing years of his reign are filled with rebellions and disasters. I shall not be able to narrate the story of them all, but that of Absalom is the most striking, and merits some degree of careful consideration. The story of David's many marriages is closely connected with that of Absalom's revolt; and indeed the Old Testament, which is cited by some as the divine support of the institution of polygamy, is at the same time the best witness of the weakness which is inherent in the system of a plurality of wives. Nearly all the events which built the closing years of David, grew out of his polygamy, and pass the severest sentence of condemnation on it.

The story of Absalom's revolt is told with great minuteness in the Bible; indeed, as Ewald has noticed, and Stanley following Ewald, with more particularity than any other event recorded in Holy Writ. Why this is so were a hard question to answer; but the development of David's character in its various phases, as displayed in the rebellion, is so rich, and to a great degree so beautiful, that I do not wonder that it caught the mind of the Hebrew historian, and was thought worthy of being recorded with great detail. It has been well said that in that revolt were exhibited all the qualities of David, his tenderness, mercy, prudence, caution, judgment; and that only one conspicuous trait, his courage, fails to appear.

Dean Stanley has given so picturesquely and with such fullness of detail the story of Absalom's revolt, that I transcribe from the glowing pages of his "Jewish Church," the

narrative of this memorable transaction. Stanley weaves together the details of the Scripture story, and out of the whole constructs a tale, which is perfectly simple, artistic and beautiful:

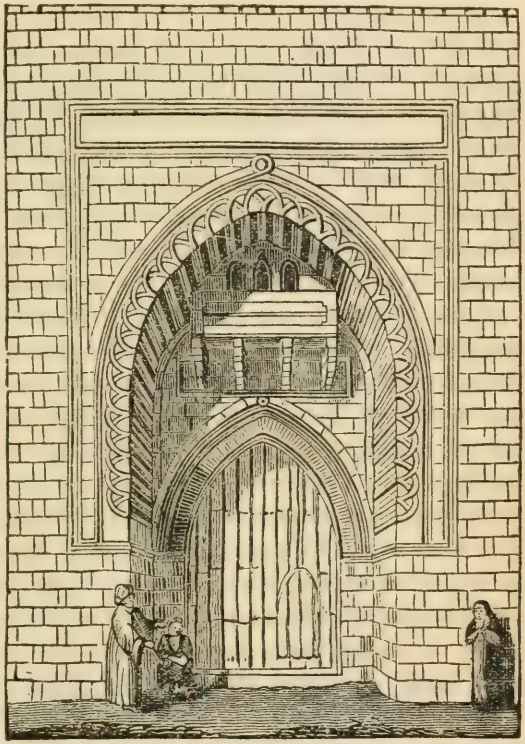
"The eldest of the Princes was Amnon, the son of Ahinoam, whom the King cherished as the heir to the throne, with an affection amounting almost to awe. His intimate friend in the family was his cousin Jonadab, one of those characters who in great houses pride themselves on being acquainted and on dealing with all the secrets of the family. This was one group in the royal circle. Another consisted of the two children of Maacah, the princess of Geshur,—Absalom and his sister Tamar, the only two of purely royal descent. In all of them the beauty for which the house of Jesse was renowned—David's brothers, David himself, Adonijah, Solomon—seemed to be concentrated. Absalom especially was in this respect the very flower and pride of the whole nation. 'In all Israel there was none to be praised for his beauty,' like him. 'From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him.' The magnificence of his hair was something wonderful. Year by year or month by month its weight was known and counted. He had a sheep-farm near Ephraim or Ephron, a few miles to the north-east of Jerusalem, and another property near the Jordan Valley, where he had erected a monument to keep alive the remembrance of his name, from the melancholy feeling that the three sons who should have preserved his race had died before him. He had, however, one daughter, who afterwards carried on the royal line in her child, called, after her grandmother, Maacah, and destined to play a conspicuous part in the history of the divided kingdom. This daughter was named Tamar, after her aunt. The elder Tamar, like her brother and her niece, was remarkable for her extraordinary beauty, whence perhaps she derived her name, 'the palm-tree,' the most graceful of oriental trees. For this, and for the homely art of making a peculiar kind of cakes, the Princess

had acquired a renown which reached beyond the seclusion of her brother's house to all the circle of the royal family.

There had been no cloud to disturb the serene relations of these different groups till the fatal day when Amnon, who had long wasted away, grown 'morning by morning paler and paler, leaner and leaner,' from a desperate passion for his half-sister Tamar,—at last contrived, through the management of Jonadab, to accomplish his evil design. It was a moment long remembered as 'the beginning of woes,' when on his brutal hatred succeeding to his brutal passion, she found herself driven out of the house, and in a frenzy of grief and indignation tore off the sleeves from her royal robes, and, with her bare arms, clasped on her head the handfuls of ashes which she had snatched from the ground, and rushed to and fro through the streets screaming aloud, till she encountered her brother Absalom, and by him was taken into his own house. The King was afraid or unwilling to punish the crime of the heir to the throne. But on Absalom, as her brother, devolved, according to Eastern notions, the dreadful duty, the frightful pleasure, of avenging his sister's wrong. All the Princes were invited by him to a pastoral festival at his country-house, and there Amnon was slain by his brother's retainers. There was a general alarm. It would seem as if there was something desperate in Absalom's character which made those around him feel that there was an immeasurable vista of vengeance opened. The other Princes rushed to their mules and galloped back to Jerusalem. The exaggerated news had already reached their father that all had perished. Jonadab reassured him. Still, the truth was dark enough; and in the presence of a loss which appears to have been deeply felt, not only by the King, but by the whole family, Absalom was forced to retire to exile beyond the limits of Palestine, to his father-in-law's court at Geshur.

But much as the King had loved Amnon, he loved Absalom more: Joab, always loyal, always ready, saw that he only needed an excuse to recall the absent son, and by a succession

of devices, Absalom was brought back first to his country property, and then to Jerusalem itself. But meanwhile, he himself had been alienated from David by his long exile. He found himself virtually chief of the King's sons. That strength and violence of will which made him terrible among his brethren was now to vent itself against his father. He courted popularity by constantly appearing in the royal seat of judgment, in the gateway of Jerusalem. He affected royal state by the unusual display of chariots and war-horses, and runners to precede him. Under pretext of a pilgrimage to Hebron, possibly as the Patriarchal sanctuary, perhaps only as his own birthplace, he there set up his claims to the throne, and became suddenly the head of a formidable revolt. In that ancient capital of the tribe of Judah, he would find adherents jealous of their own elected king's absorption into the nation at large. And not far off, amongst the southern hills, in Giloh, dwelt the renowned Ahithophel,

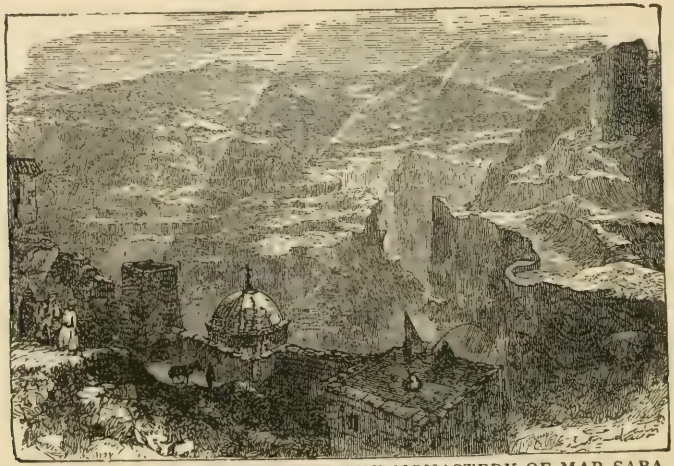


ORIENTAL GATE OR DOOR.
Such as that where Absalom sat. It was the favorite place for hearing charges and giving judgment.

wisest of all the Israelite statesmen. According to the traditional interpretation of several of the Psalms, he was in the closest confidence with David, though, if we may trust the indications of the history, he had, through the wrongs of his grand-daughter Bathsheba, the deepest personal reasons for enmity.

It was apparently early on the morning of the day after he had received the news of the rebellion that the King left the city of Jerusalem. There is no single day in the Jewish history of which so elaborate an account remains as of this memorable flight. There is none, we may add, that combines so many of David's characteristics,—his patience, his high-spirited religion, his generosity, his calculation: we miss only his daring courage. Was it crushed, for the moment, by the weight of parental grief, or of bitter remorse?

Every stage of the mournful procession was marked by some peculiar incident. He left the city, accompanied by his whole court. None of his household remained, except ten of the women of the harem, whom he sent back, apparently to occupy the palace. The usual array of mules and asses was left behind. They were all on foot. The first halt was at a spot on the outskirts of the city, known as "the Far House." The second was by a solitary olive-tree that stood by the road to the wilderness of the Jordan. Here the long procession formed itself. The body-guard of Philistines moved at the head; then followed the great mass of the regular soldiery; next came the high officers of the court; and last, immediately before the King himself, the six hundred warriors, his ancient companions, with their wives and children. Amongst these David observed Ittai of Gath, and with the true nobleness of his character entreated the Philistine chief not to peril his own or his countrymen's lives in the service of a fallen and a stranger sovereign. But Ittai declared his resolution (with a fervor which almost inevitably recalls a like profession made almost on the same spot to the Great Descendant of David centuries afterwards) to follow him in life and in death. The



GORGE OF THE KIDRON, NEAR THE MONASTERY OF MAR SABA.
This Great Wady runs from the Dead Sea to Jerusalem.

King accepted his faithful service; and calling him to his side, they advanced to the head of the march, and passed over the deep ravine of the Kidron, very closely followed by the guards and their children. It was the signal that he was determined on flight; and a wail of grief rose from the whole procession, which seemed to be echoed back by mountain and valley, as if 'the whole land wept with a loud voice.' At this point they were overtaken by another procession, consisting of the Levites and the two Priests, Zadok and Abiathar, bringing the ark from its place on the hill of Zion to accompany the King in his flight. There is a difference in the conduct of the rival Priests which seems to indicate their different shades of loyalty. Zadok remained by the ark; Abiathar went apart on the mountain side, apparently waiting to watch the stream of followers as it flowed past. With a spirit worthy of the King who was Prophet as well as Priest, David refused this new aid. He would not use the ark as a charm; he had too much reverence for it to risk it in his personal peril. He reminded Zadok that he too by his prophetic insight ought to have known better. '*Thou* a seer!' It was a case where the agility of their two sons was likely to be of more avail than the officious zeal of the chief Priests. To them he left the charge of bringing him tidings from the capital, and passed onwards to the Jordan. Another burst of wild lament broke out as the procession turned up the mountain pathway; the King leading the long dirge, which was taken up all down the slope of Olivet. The King drew his cloak over his head, and the rest did the same; he only distinguished by his unsandaled feet. At the top of the mountain, consecrated by one of the altars in that age common on the hill-tops of Palestine, and apparently used habitually by David, they were met by Hushai the Archite, 'the friend,' as he was officially called, of the King. The priestly garment, which he wore after the fashion, as it would seem, of David's chief officers, was torn, and his head was smeared with dust, in the agony of his grief. In him David saw his first gleam of hope. For

warlike purposes he was useless; but of political stratagem he was a master. A moment before, the tidings had come of the treason of Ahithophel. To frustrate his designs, Hushai was sent back, just in time to meet Absalom arriving from Hebron.

It was noon when David passed over the mountain top, and now, as Jerusalem was left behind, and the new prospect



DIFFERENT MODES OF OBEISANCE.
The attitude with which ancient monarchs received homage.

opened before him, two new characters appeared, both in connection with the hostile tribe of Benjamin, whose territory they were entering. One of them was Ziba, slave of Mephibosheth, taking advantage of the civil war to make his own fortunes, and bringing the story that Mephibosheth had gone over to the rebels, in the hope of a restoration of the dynasty of his grandfather Saul. The King gratefully accepted his

offering, took the stores of bread, dates, grapes, and wine for his followers, and, in a moment of indignation, granted to Ziba the whole property of Mephibosheth. At Bahurim, also on the downward pass, he encountered another member of the fallen dynasty, Shimei, the son of Gera. His house was just within the borders of Benjamin on the spot where—apparently for this reason—Michal, the princess of that same house, had left her husband, Phaltiel. All the fury of the rival dynasties, with all the foul names which long feuds had engendered, burst forth as the two parties here came into collision. On the one side the fierce Benjamite saw 'the Man of Blood,' stained, as it must have seemed to him, with the slaughter of Abner and Ishbosheth, and the seven princes whose cruel death at Gibeon was fresh in the national recollection. On the other side the wild sons of Zeruiah saw in Shimei one of the 'dead dogs,' or 'dogs' heads,' according to the offensive language bandied to and fro amongst the political rivals of that age. A deep ravine parted the King's march from the house of the furious Benjamite. But along the ridge he ran, throwing stones as if for the adulterer's punishment, or when he came to a patch of dust on the dry hill-side, taking it up, and scattering it over the royal party below, with the elaborate curses of which only eastern partisans are fully masters,—curses which David never forgot, and of which, according to the Jewish tradition, every letter was significant. The companions of David, who felt an insult to their master as an injury



DIFFERENT MODES OF OBEISANCE.

to themselves, could hardly restrain themselves. Abishai—with a fiery zeal, which reminds us of the sons of Thunder centuries later—would fain have rushed across the defile, and cut off the head of the blaspheming rebel. One alone retained his calmness. The King, with a depth of feeling undisturbed by any political animosities, bade them remember that after the desertion of his favorite son anything was tolerable, and (with the turn of thought so natural to an Oriental) that the curses of the Benjamite might divert some portion of the Divine anger from himself, and that they were in a certain sense the direct words of God Himself. The exiles passed on, and in a state of deep exhaustion reached the Jordan valley, and there rested after the long eventful day, at the ford or bridge of the river. Amongst the thickets of the Jordan, the asses of Ziba were unladen, and the weary travelers refreshed themselves, and waited for tidings from Jerusalem. It must have been long after nightfall, that the joyful sound was heard of the two youths, sons of the High Priests, bursting in upon the encampment with the news from the capital.

Absalom had arrived from Hebron almost immediately after David's departure; and, by the advice of Ahithophel, took the desperate step—the decisive assumption, according to Oriental usage, of royal rights—of seizing what remained of the royal harem in the most public and offensive manner. The next advice was equally bold. The aged counselor offered, himself, that very night, to pursue and cut off the King before he had crossed the Jordan. That single death would close the civil war. The nation would return to her legitimate Prince, as a bride to her husband. But now another adviser had appeared on the stage,—Hushai, fresh from the top of Olivet, with his false professions of rebellion, with his ingenious scheme for saving his royal master. He drew a picture of the extreme difficulty of following Ahithophel's counsel, and sketched the scheme of a general campaign. It shows how deeply seated was the dread of David's activity and courage, even in this decline of his fortunes, that such a

counsel should have swayed the mind of the rebel Prince. It was urged with all the force of Eastern poetry. The she-bear in the open field robbed of her whelps, the wild boar in the Jordan valley, would not be fiercer than the old King and his faithful followers. David, as of old, would be concealed in some deep cave, or on some inaccessible hill, and all pursuit would be as vain as that of Saul on the crags of Engedi. An army must be got together capable of submerging him as in a shower of dew, or of dragging the fortress in which he may have been entrenched, stone by stone, into the valley. Absalom gave way to the false counselor, and Hushai immediately sent off his emissaries to David. Near, if not close underneath the eastern walls of Jerusalem, was a spring, known as the 'fullers' spring,' where the two sons of Zadok and Abiathar lay ensconced, waiting for their orders for the King. Thither, like the women at Jerusalem now, came, probably as if to wash or to draw water, the female slave of their fathers' house, with the secret tidings which they were to convey, urging the King to immediate flight. They crossed as fast as their swift feet could carry them over Mount Olivet. Absalom had already caught scent of them, and his runners were hard upon their track. Aside, even into the village of Bahurim, the hostile village of Shimei and Phaltiel, they darted. In it was a friendly house which they sought. In its court, they climbed down a well, over the mouth of which their host's wife spread a cloth with a heap of corn, and with an equivocal reply turned aside the pursuers. The youths hasted on down the pass, woke up the King from his sleep, called upon him to cross 'the water,' and before the break of day, the whole party were in safety on the farther side.

It has been conjectured with much probability that as the first sleep of that evening was commemorated in the fourth Psalm, so in the third is expressed the feeling of David's thankfulness at the final close of those twenty-four hours of which every detail has been handed down, as if with the consciousness of their importance at the time. He had 'laid him down

in peace' that night 'and slept;' for in that great defection of man, 'the Lord alone had caused him to dwell in safety. He had laid down and slept and awaked, for the Lord had sustained him.' The tradition of the Septuagint ascribes the one hundred and forty-third Psalm to the time 'when his son was pursuing him.' Some at least of its contents might well belong to that night. 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' 'Cause me to hear thy loving kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.'

There is another group of Psalms—the forty-first, fifty-fifth, sixty-ninth, and one hundred and ninth—in which a long popular belief has seen an amplification of David's bitter cry, 'O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.' Many of the circumstances agree. The dreadful imprecations in those Psalms—unequalled for vehemence in any other part of the sacred writings—correspond with the passion of David's own expressions. The greatness, too, of Ahithophel himself in the history is worthy of the importance ascribed to the object of those awful maledictions. That oracular wisdom, which made his house a kind of shrine, seems to move the spirit of the sacred writer with an involuntary admiration. Everywhere he is treated with a touch of awful reverence. When he dies, the interest of the plot ceases, and his death is given with a stately grandeur, quite unlike the mixture of the terrible and the contemptible which has sometimes gathered round the end of those whom the religious sentiment of mankind has placed under its ban. 'When he saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass'—the ass, on which he, like all the magnates of Israel except the royal family, made his journeys,—he mounted the southern hills, in which his native city lay—'and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried,' not like an excommunicated outcast, but like a venerable Patriarch, 'in the sepulchre of his father.'

With the close of that eventful day, a cloud rests on the subsequent history of the rebellion. For three months longer it seems to have lasted. Absalom was formally anointed King. Amasa—his cousin, but by his father's side of wild Arabian blood—took the command of the army, which, according to Hushai's counsel, had been raised from the whole country, and with this he crossed the Jordan in pursuit of the King.

David meantime was secure in the fortress of Mahanaim, the ancient trans-jordanic sanctuary, which had formerly sheltered the rival house of Saul. Three potentates of that pastoral district came forward at once to his support. Shobi, the son of David's ancient friend Nahash, King of Ammon, perhaps put by David in his brother Hanun's place; Machir, the son of Ammiel, the former protector of Mephibosheth; Barzillai, an aged chief of vast wealth and influence, perhaps the father of Adriel, the husband of Merab. Their connection with David's enemies, whether of the house of Saul or of Ammon, was overbalanced by earlier alliances with David, or by their respect for himself personally. They brought, with the profuse liberality of Arabs, the butter, cheese, wheat, barley, flour, parched corn, beans, lentiles, pulse, honey, sheep, with which the forests and pastures of Gilead abounded, and on which the historian dwells as if he had been himself one of 'the hungry and weary and thirsty' who had revelled in the delightful stores thus placed before them. 'The fearfulness and trembling' which had been upon David were now over. He had fled 'on the wings of a dove far away into the wilderness,' and was at rest. His spirit revived within him. He arranged his army into three divisions. Joab and Abishai commanded two. The third, where we might have expected to find Benaiah, was under the faithful Ittai. For a moment, the King wished to place himself at their head. But his life was worth 'ten thousand men,' and he accordingly remained behind in the fortress. The first battle took place in the 'forest of Ephraim.' The exact spot of the conflict, the origin of the name, so strange on the east of the Jordan,

the details of the engagement, are alike unknown. We see only the close, which has evidently been preserved from the mournful interest which it awakened in the national mind. In the interlacing thickets, so unusual on the west of the Jordan, so abundant on the east, which the Ammonite wars had made familiar to David's veterans, the host of Absalom lost its way. Absalom riding at full speed on his royal mule, suddenly met a detachment of David's army, and darting aside through the wood, was caught by the head—possibly entangled by his long hair—between the thick boughs of an overhanging tree, known by the name of 'The Great Terebinth,' swept off the animal, and there remained suspended. None of the ordinary soldiers ventured to attack the helpless Prince. Joab alone took upon himself the responsibility of breaking David's orders. He and his ten attendants formed a circle round the gigantic tree, enclosing its precious victim, and first by his three pikes, then by their swords, accomplished the bloody work. Hard by was a well-known ditch or pit, of vast dimensions. Into this the corpse was thrown, and covered by a huge mound of stones. Mussulman legends represent hell as yawning at the moment of his death beneath the feet of the unhappy Prince. The modern Jews, as they pass the monument in the valley of the Kidron, to which they have given his name, have buried its sides deep in the stones which they throw against it in execration. Augustine dooms him to perdition, as a type of the Donatists. But the sacred writer is moved only to deep compassion. The thought of that sad death of the childless Prince, of the desolate cairn in the forest instead of the honored grave that he had designed for himself in the King's dale,—probably beside his beloved sheep-walks on the hills of Ephraim,—blots out the remembrance of the treason and rebellion, and every detail is given to enhance the pathos of the scene which follows.

The King sate waiting for tidings between the two gates which connected the double city of the 'Two Camps' of Ma-

hanaim. In the tower above the gates, as afterwards at Jezreel, stood a watchman, to give notice of what he saw. Two messengers, each endeavoring to outstrip the other, were seen running from the forest. The first who arrived was Ahimaaz, the fleet son of Zadok, whose peculiar mode of running was known far and wide through the country. He had been instructed by Joab not to make himself the bearer of tidings so mournful, and—eager as he had been to fulfil his character of a good messenger, and dexterously as he had outstripped his forerunner by the choice of his route—when it came to the point his heart failed, and he spoke only of the strange confusion in which he had left the army. At this moment the other messenger, a stranger,—probably an Ethiopian slave, perhaps one of Joab's ten attendants,—burst in, and abruptly revealed the fatal news. The passionate burst of grief which followed is one of the best proofs of the deep and genuine affection of David's character. He rushed into the watchman's chamber over the gateway, and eight times over repeated the wail of grief for Absalom his son. It was the belief of the more merciful of the Jewish doctors that at each cry, one of the seven gates of hell rolled back, and that with the eighth, the lost spirit of Absalom was received into the place of Paradise. It was a sorrow which did not confine itself to words. He could not forget the hand which had slain his son. The immediate effect of his indignation was a solemn vow to supersede Joab by Amasa, and in this was laid the lasting breach between himself and his nephew, which neither the one nor the other ever forgave. The memorial of his grief was the response which it awakened in the heart of his subjects,—the lament over the winning and beautiful creature, whose charm outlived the shock even of ungrateful, ungenerous, and unsuccessful rebellion.

But stronger even than his tenderness for Absalom, was the love of David for his people, and of his people for David. He acknowledged the force of Joab's entreaty to show himself once more in public. He sent to Jerusalem to invoke the



ABSALOM'S TOMB.

Built by Herod the Great, but bearing the name of Absalom and an object of special execration among the Jews.

sympathy of his native tribe through the two chief Priests. He came down from the eastern hills to the banks of the Jordan. A ferry-boat, or a bridge of boats, was in readiness to convey the King across the river. On that bridge, foremost in his professions of loyalty, was the savage Shimei of Bahurim, 'first of the house of Joseph,' grovelling in penitence, and there, in spite of Abishai's ever-recurring anger, won from David the oath of protection, which, in word at least, the King kept sacred to the end of his life. Next came the unfortunate Mephibosheth, squalid with the squalor of his untrimmed moustache, his clothes unwashed, his nails unpared, his long hair flowing unshorn, and his lame feet untended, since he had wrapt himself in deep mourning on the day of his benefactor's fall. By the judgment—fair or unfair—between him and Ziba, was concluded the final amnesty with the house of Saul. There, as he turned away from the wild and hospitable chiefs who had befriended him in his exile, the King parted reluctantly from the aged Gileadite Barzillai, whom he vainly tried to tempt from his native forests to the business and the pleasures of the court of Jerusalem. Chimham the son of Barzillai took his father's place, and, with his descendants, long remained in Western Palestine a witness of the loyalty of the Eastern tribes. On the other side the river stood in order the chiefs of Judah, summoned by Zadok and Abiathar, to welcome back the 'flesh of their flesh and bone of their bones,' whom they had basely deserted. With them, the King entered his capital, and the Restoration of David was accomplished."

CHAPTER XX.

CLOSING EVENTS OF DAVID'S REIGN—PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE.

Two Minor Rebellions—David Falls into the Usual Ways of an Oriental Despot—Introduction of a Strict Military Discipline—Heavy Taxes Laid on the People—The King's Favorites—Popular Discontent—Sheba's Rebellion—The Conscription under Joab—The Penalty Laid on David—Pestilence—Its Limits—The Threshing-floor of Araunah—Mount Moriah—David's Purchase—Its Consecration to a New Use—The Present Aspect of that Threshing-floor—Mosque of Omar—Access to it—The Cavern Beneath the Dome—Adonijah's Rebellion—David an Old Man—The Royal Succession—Death of David—His Burial—His Sepulchre.

THE close of David's reign was embittered by two other rebellions, neither of them to be compared with that of Absalom, yet both of them formidable, and indicative of the relaxed hold of the King upon the affections of his subjects. There are hints enough in both II. Samuel and I. Chronicles, that David in his old age adopted many of the habits and customs of oriental princes in general; that the people were no longer permitted to live in a state of tranquillity and pursue the avocations of simple pastoral life; that heavy taxes were laid upon them; that a strict military discipline was introduced, and the condition of the inhabitants of the remote country towns and villages was but little removed from an estate of servitude. The King was surrounded by favorites who drank up the hard won earnings of the people like water; and the capital was no doubt the reservoir, always filling up, but never full, whither all the resources of the land were flowing. Out of such a state of things discontent must have sprung, and David must have been greatly

changed from the simple Shepherd King, before even as attractive a personage as Absalom, could have stolen the hearts of the people so quickly. It probably grew worse and worse, because even this undescribed Sheba, of whom we merely know that he was the son of Bichri, drew the whole nation to him at once. His journey northward from Jerusalem to Abel, under the shadow of Hermon and close to the springs of the Jordan, was like a conqueror's ovation. Under the stern hand of Joab, the passing rebellion was at once crushed, and the head of the leader brought back in triumph to the capital.

No one thing shows the growth of the despotic spirit in the heart of David more than the numbering of the people by Joab. It is evident that this was not a census; it was not taken, as the census had previously been, by the priests, but by a military commission, of which Joab was the head. It was probably to be followed by a conscription and the enrolling of a standing army, a measure absolutely forbidden, not only by the spirit but by the letter of the Mosaic code. But the spirit of Joab, stern and even cruel as he was by nature, was in this thing more loyal to God than was David. He did not dare to refuse to obey, but he carried the King's command into effect very unwillingly, and even went so far as to entirely pass by two conspicuous tribes, and not to enroll those who were under twenty years of age. The result of the enrollment, (which was effected in nine months and twenty days,) is given differently in II. Samuel and I. Chronicles, but taking the smallest estimate, it is clear that David was lord of a mighty domain. The course of Joab is given in the record; and we can clearly trace him, beginning at Aroer in Moab, east of the Jordan, and then passing northward through the hills of Gilead, westward across the country near the sources of the Jordan, up to the Cœle Syrian valley, and thence southward till he reached Beersheba. But no sooner was the result ascertained and made known to the King, when his faithful chaplain, the oft-mentioned Gad, charged his fault upon him, and threat-

ened him with his well deserved penalty. David was to choose between three years of famine, three months of defeat at the hands of his enemies, and three days of pestilence. He seems to have feared the second condition more than the first or third, and under that feeling to have uttered his oft quoted words, "I am in a great strait; let us fall now into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hands of man." The evil which did befall him was a grievous pestilence which did not cease its



ANCIENT COINS.
Such as those paid by David to Araunah. (See also p. 324—327.)

ravages till it had carried away seventy thousand men. It did not enter the city however, but was stayed just on the edge, after advancing as far as the hill of Moriah, east of Mt. Zion, and separated from it by a valley afterwards known as the Tyropœan or the Vale of the Cheesemongers. This hill, anciently consecrated by the attempted sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, was then in the possession of the Jebusites and their King Araanah, or Ornan. This chieftain, while acknowl-

edging himself a vassal of David, lived on excellent terms with his master, and showed a fine spirit of kindness and loyalty in the transaction which has made his name immortal. The plague was stayed close by the threshing-floor of Araunah, on the summit of Mount Moriah. This threshing-floor was not made of clay or hard baked soil thrown up in a gentle mound, as was and still is often the case in Palestine, but was of rock, slightly smoothed down and left in a convex form, rising above the neighboring earth. Near it or under it was a cave in which Araunah used to deposit the grain after it had been



SHEKELS.

threshed out from the straw. David, with that fine mingling of courtesy and religion which characterized him, while anxious to secure this threshing-floor to build an altar on, was unwilling to accept it as a gift, and paid for it a sum, which although differently told in II. Samuel and I. Chronicles was clearly a good, round sum. On that threshing-floor David erected his altar, and sacrificed to God in commemoration of the close of the pestilence; and the spot was so naturally adapted to religious uses, that Solomon erected his temple upon and around this same

threshing-floor, and placed the great altar just where David had set his. The cavern underneath, where Araunah, the politic Jebusite chief had deposited his grain, was transformed into a conduit for conveying away the blood of the sacrifices, and an outlet was excavated which led down to one of the deep ravines which surround Jerusalem. After Solomon's temple had passed away, Zerubbabel erected his temple on the same spot; subsequently Herod reared his magnificent structure on the same site; afterwards Omar erected the noble mosque which bears his name, over the ancient threshing-floor of Araunah, and beneath that beautiful dome which appears in every view of Jerusalem, and which is familiar to almost every child in this country, there can still be seen the ancient stone, little changed in all probability, from the form which it bore in the time of Araunah and David. It is now surrounded by a strong iron fence; and no Christian is permitted to do more than reach through the hand and touch it. Even the Jews, who have the deepest interest in it, can do no more than Christians; and it is one of the latest results of English power and diplomacy, that even this boon has been granted to any but Mahometans. Down to the time of the Prince of Wales' visit to Palestine, the noble building, the Dome of the Rock (Kub-



PIECES OF SILVER, HALF SHEKELS.

bit es Sakrah) was absolutely closed to Europeans: from the crest of Olivet people were allowed to look down upon it, and admire the beautiful pavement; but the half concealed daggers of the swarthy and scowling guard at the gates, hinted very plainly at the fate which would meet any one who should attempt to enter without professing the Moslem faith. But since the triumph of General Bruce's diplomacy, and the entrance of the Prince of Wales' party, there has been no difficulty, and now the payment of an English sovereign (five dollars) will secure entrance for any well-dressed Christian. It is one of the most interesting spots in the Holy Land; and what is remarkable, it is equally hallowed in the eyes of Mahometan, Jew and Christian. It is about sixty feet by forty, and rises in a mound-like form above the marble pavement. At the edge it is about a foot above the surrounding-floor; in the middle it is about five feet above the pavement. Over it is the beautiful dome which is so conspicuous in all views of Jerusalem, and through thousands upon thousands of panes of brilliantly colored glass, the light breaks upon the rough, plain, and ancient threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. One can go down into the cavern beneath it; and a countryman of ours, Dr. Barclay, has crawled through the conduit and found that it led him to the Fountain of the Virgin in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

The revolt of Adonijah never arose to the dignity of Absalom's, or even Sheba's rebellion. He was the oldest surviving son of David, a man of fine presence and of an ambitious nature. He was aided by the invaluable alliance of Joab and Abiathar, the high priest. Why Joab deserted his master at last, is not told: but I can not help thinking that at last the King's military and despotic tendencies had gone too far for even the loyal and well tried Joab, and drove even him into the service of the son. Besides, David was now an old man, and would not long hold out; the question of a successor could not be greatly deferred, and it seems probable that Joab wished to cast the scale in favor of Adonijah, and against



MOSQUE OF OMAR, OR DOME OF THE ROCK.

The Dome proper is directly above the threshing-floor which David bought of Araunah.

the youthful and aspiring Solomon, by throwing his own influence in favor of the former. But Nathan was still faithful to the King, and Bathsheba, a pushing, crafty, and aspiring woman, under the influence, also, of fear that in case of Adonijah's success, both she and her son would be put to death, joined with Nathan in endeavoring to get the move on Adonijah, and have Solomon made king. The thing was laid before David in a shrewd manner, and the King showed a vigor and decision worthy of his best days. The proclamation of Solomon down in the valley of Gihon, brought the ambitious project of Adonijah to grief, and placed Solomon without a rival at the head of the kingdom.

The death of David followed shortly after. The old King passed away at the age of seventy, completely worn out. The decrepitude of his last years is clearly hinted at in the opening of I. Kings, yet his closing words, are full of his old power, trust in God and deep feeling. We have as the record of his spiritual activity at that time, the glorious strain recorded in II. Samuel, chapter twenty-second, and repeated almost word for word in the eighteenth Psalm; one of the noblest poems in the world. The brief parting strain in II. Samuel, twenty-third chapter, is very beautiful, tender and thoughtful, and blends together well the lofty aspirations and the imperfect attainment of David's character. The seventy-second Psalm, which is declared to be the last that David wrote, is one of the finest, if not the very finest of all the Psalms, and shows that his poetic fire was unquenched to the last. Yet more tender and touching are the words recorded in the closing chapters of I. Chronicles, in which David addresses his son Solomon, and prays for his weal; and even those who are not sensible of the grandeur of the eighteenth and seventy-second Psalms, can not fail to be struck by the pathos and beauty of his parting words to Solomon.

David was buried in the very city which he had conquered and re-erected; on the summit of Mt. Zion. The tomb, which was also the resting-place of Solomon and several subsequent

kings, was in perfect condition in New Testament times, and is referred to by the apostle Peter. Its site is still pointed out, on the southern part of Mt. Zion, outside of the modern wall of the city, and in close proximity to the Armenian, the English and the American burying-ground. The room over the reputed tomb of David is of great antiquity; and an old tradition asserts that in it the Apostles met and celebrated the Lord's Supper; hence the name of the room, the Cœnaculum; hence also, the old name of the whole building, the Church of the Apostles. There seems to be but little doubt that in a cavern beneath that ancient Christian church, lie the remains of David. It is ardently to be wished that in our day thorough investigations might be made there, and that we might learn whether the mighty founder of Jerusalem lies just there or not. There is not the slightest doubt that a thorough search would bring to light the tombs of the kings; for the so-called "Tombs of the Kings" lying a mile or so north of the city, are known to be of comparatively modern date.

CHAPTER XXI.

SOLOMON'S CHARACTER AND EARLIER ACTS.

The Reign of Solomon a Contrast to that of David—Change in the Public Tastes—Not Much of Shepherd Life Left in the Royal Home—David's Palace a Simple House Judged by Solomon's Standard—Not Altogether an Advance from David's to Solomon's Time, but Rather a Fall—No Increase in Faith and Purity—An Epoch of Effeminacy—Solomon a Believer in the Visible—His Life Pitched to a Much Lower Key than that of David—The Influences Around His Youth—His Crafty and Ambitious Mother—The Realm He Found Himself Master of—Its Extent and Boundary Lines—His First Act one of Destruction—His Marriage into the Royal House of Egypt—Mighty Contrast Between Moses' Time and Solomon's—The Effect of the Egyptian Alliance—The Compact with Hiram of Tyre—The Officers of Solomon's Household.

THE reign of Solomon stands in marked contrast to that of his father David; and yet it was in some respects the natural product and legitimate result of it. The change in the national character was very like that which we witness between the days of our grandfathers and our own. In David's time the taste for fine buildings had hardly begun; it was an era of simple tastes and manners. The King, whose early life had been passed in rural simplicity, never lost the mark of the shepherd boy career; and although he built himself a palace, it was no such building as Solomon erected for himself; and the temple which David projected, was conceived in the spirit of profound religion, and not in that of a passionate love of magnificence. It is a great drop from the time of David to that of Solomon; some might call it advance, but not so does it seem to me. For although there was a great increase of luxury and in what in the fashionable language of modern times is called "refinement," still there

was no increase in faith, purity, nobleness; the vast accessions of wealth brought in corruption and all kinds of social evils; and the state of morals reflected in the book of Proverbs indicates that Jerusalem fell then into a state of degradation hardly surpassed by the most profligate capitals of modern times. The epoch of David had the more roughness, but that of Solomon had the more effeminacy. David was a man whose whole life was founded in the fear of God; and out of that fear sprang his songs, as naturally as those which a bird warbles on a mild June day. No adversity was sharp enough to extinguish the flame of his piety; it burned all the brighter, the more it came under the influence of chilling fortunes; and great as was his genius, and noble as were his talents, his religiousness was the strongest trait in his character. But Solomon was quite different in this; with more prudence and sagacity and worldly wisdom than his father, he had far less of faith in unseen things. He was the type of the realists of our day, as David is the type of the men of faith in the earlier history of our country. Solomon believed in what he could see and handle; and although the prayer which he offered at the dedication of the temple, is a grand and comprehensive utterance, yet it required all the solemnity which was concentrated in that hour to draw from him such a burst of piety. The rest of his life was pitched to a much lower key; and the magnificence of the temple was rather the manifestation of his pride than of his religion. He who loved ostentation and magnificence, was only too well pleased with this opportunity of exhibiting it under the guise of an offering to his Lord.

Solomon grew up under influences which were far from uniform, and which made him the broken, fragmentary character that he was. From David he inherited his prudence, his talents, and his sagacity; from Nathan his instructor, he probably received the elements of morality, and the influence of a firm, and uncompromising obedience to God; while to his mother, we have no reason to think that he could have been indebted for anything good. An ambitious, artful, push-

ing woman, loving pomp, luxury, power, capable of being an accomplice in a great act of sin and shame, she must have been anything but a faithful mother. Devoted to her son's worldly advancement, she had been a prime mover in suppressing Adonijah's rebellion, and had placed her son on the throne at a time when it seemed hopelessly lost to him; but nothing that we know of her leads us to believe that her influence could have been a helpful one in the training of a good and virtuous son. From her he seems to have inherited his love of luxury, power, magnificence, his easy temper, his sensuousness, and no small part of his worldly wisdom. Surrounded by these influences, it is not strange that Solomon became what he was. At the age of eighteen or twenty he found himself master of one of the greatest empires in the world, the rival of Egypt, the superior of Assyria, and probably of Phœnicia also. He felt the burden which his father had left to him to be a heavy one; and looking over his vast domains, which extended northward to Hamath, high up in the Lebanon range, eastward to the Euphrates, southward to the Arabian desert, and westward to Egypt, he felt the need of wisdom, and he asked God for what was evidently his most urgent necessity. And, to quote the expression of another, "he became wise because he had set his heart on wisdom." It is an evident sign of his precocity that he did not plunge at once into a young man's revelries, and destroy himself with lust; but that he set himself to the great work of governing his great empire wisely and well.

His first act was to destroy the men who had seemed to David to be dangerous to the young king. One of them was Adonijah, his older brother, who had apparently as great hold on the popular heart as Absalom had had before him, and whom not even the sanctity of the altar had been able to save. Another was Joab, whose stern fidelity to David at last gave way, and who had become a partisan of Adonijah's, and a foe to Solomon. Another was that vile offshoot of the house of Saul, Shimei, whose insults were fresh in the remembrance of

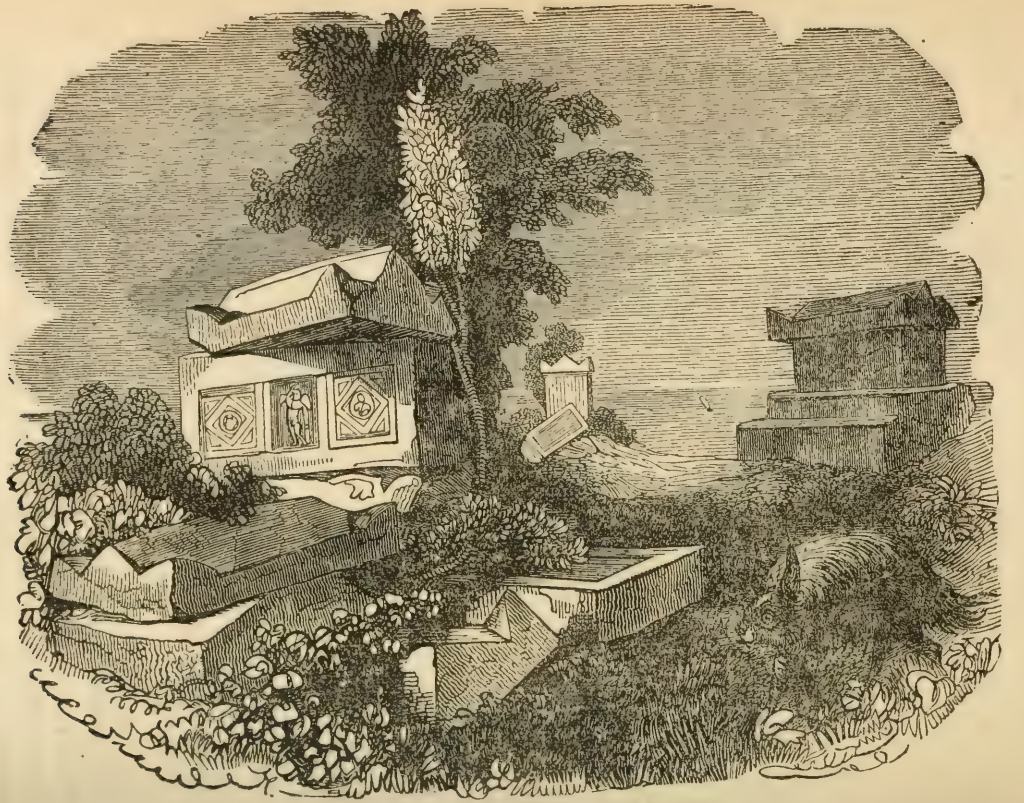
David, and who was considered a dangerous person to have near the young King. I do not think that it was cruelty which dictated to David or Solomon the necessity of putting these men out of the way; but the danger which a prince so young would always be liable to incur at their hands.

The first act of Solomon's career which indicates that he was determined to purchase the extension of his power by peaceful means, was his marrying an Egyptian princess. It is an act which may well fill us with amazement; that a man sprung from a race which but five hundred years before had left the Egyptian soil as slaves, should now aspire to the hand of the daughter of the Egyptian King. Such a change had rarely been effected any where else. The Hebrew slaves who went out of Egypt were probably in a far more degraded state as compared with their masters than were our own slaves before the rebellion; and the rise from that estate to the condition of strength and prosperity in which they were at the time of Solomon, was immensely great. At the time of the Exodus such a thing would seem the greatest of impossibilities, but it came to pass at last. Under David's reign, as we have already seen, the empire had extended till in area it was much before Egypt; and it was probably superior in many elements to any power then existing on the Euphrates or the Tigris. The alliance by marriage appears to have been entered into without any hindrance on the part of the Egyptian government; and not a word is dropped in the sacred narrative which would indicate that the match was regarded as an unequal one. The queen, although not the first wife whom Solomon married, took precedence over all the rest in point of rank, and he built for her a palace which must have been one of the finest buildings in the world at the time of its erection. It does not appear that the queen brought her idolatry with her, and that Solomon erected any temple for her to worship in; no mention is made of her relation to religion; and it was not till a subsequent period that he established altars and shrines in honor of the divinities which his marriages with heathen princesses

brought into vogue in his capital. The alliance with Egypt must have been prolific in results however; it no doubt made Egyptian science, art, household customs and the like, current in Jerusalem if not in Palestine, and must have exerted a powerful influence not only on the court but also on the people.

Quite as prolific in results probably was the alliance with Hiram the king of Tyre. This city, the chief seat doubtless of the Phœnician territory, had exerted a strong influence over the habits of the tribes of Asher and Naphtali; for during David's day there had been a very friendly state of relations between the Jewish and the Phœnician monarch. Tyre was a great trading city, sending fleets to all parts of the Mediterranean, and also around Africa it would appear, and bringing back by this circuitous way the rich products of Southern Africa and the coasts of Asia. Tyre could supply Israel with the finest works of arts; and in return could receive the agricultural products of Palestine. While art was at a discount in Israel, of course there could be no reciprocal relations between the neighboring powers; but when David and still more when Solomon began to want the finest products which the world afforded, of course there was an immediate development of commerce.

The list of officers whom Solomon appointed to supply his table is given with much detail, and the places whence they drew their supplies, as well as the extent of the supplies which they provided, are stated with marked exactness. The places over which they were set, are all noted for their fertility; almost all of them are known at the present day, nearly enough at all events, to show that in supplying the royal table Solomon had strict regard to the most fertile districts in his realm. It would be worth while for the reader to turn to the fourth chapter of I. Kings, and to look up the places there with the help of a Bible dictionary; he would soon see that every one of these places there, shows even now, in all the neglect which has come upon Palestine, that then Solomon was taxing the best parts of his domains. Of course the



SEPULCHRAL MONUMENTS NEAR SIDON.

These huge masses of stone commemorate doubtless those great men who once were the merchant princes of Tyre and Sidon. .

twenty-eight thousand pounds of bread which were made and the unreckoned number of pounds of meat which were consumed were not for the royal table alone, but were for the general use of the court and the garrison at Jerusalem; amounting in all to twelve or fourteen thousand men. Still the tax was a very onerous one, and weighed down heavily upon the people, producing no doubt, very serious discontent.

CHAPTER XXII.

SOLOMON'S ARCHITECTURAL AND OTHER PUBLIC WORKS.

The Erection of the Temple—Planned by David, but Executed by Solomon—Relation of Its Size to that of the Tabernacle—The Temple About the Size of a Moderately Large Village Church—Its Divisions—Its Sacred Vessels—The Gold Used in Its Floor and Sides—The Fame of the Edifice—The Foundation Stones Which now Remain—Their Great Size—Other Remains—Solomon's Palace—The Armory—The House of the Forest of Lebanon—The Porch of Pillars—Magnificence of all these Structures—Adornment of the Suburbs of Jerusalem—The Pools of Solomon—The Aqueduct—The Fortifications Which He Built—Palmyra—Solomon's Drain upon the Resources of his Subjects—The Establishment of a Navy in the Red Sea—Trade With Ophir—Where was Ophir—The "Ships of Tarshish"—The Queen of Sheba—Solomon's Administration—His Mistakes.

THE erection of the temple was the most signal event in the reign of Solomon. It had been planned even in its minutest details by David, who had also amassed a large part of the treasures which would be required in its erection. But the incessant wars of David prevented his entering upon the work in person; and so down to the close of his reign, the people had no other sanctuary than the ancient tent. The temple was to retain the same general arrangement which had characterized the tabernacle, which in its turn, was conformed to the general arrangement of an Egyptian temple. The number of cubits which entered into the structure of Solomon's edifice, was in the case of each apartment exactly twice that which was in the respective apartments of the tabernacle. And yet, with this enlargement, the temple was very small, judged by our modern standard. It was about the size of a moderately large village church, although differently proportioned. It was long and narrow, the

length of the whole edifice being ninety feet, and the breadth thirty. This was divided into two parts, the Most Holy Place and the Holy Place, while at the front was the porch, flanked by the two ornate and much admired pillars, Jachin and Boaz, and at the sides were the small chambers for the priests. The worship was not conducted within the temple; the people stood in the great court on the outside which was surrounded by a fence of some sort. On this open square stood the great altar and the huge laver used in the ablutions of the priests. Within the Most Holy Place, which no human being but the high priest could enter, and even he only once a year, there was no object but the old weather-beaten chest which contained the two granite slabs on which the Law had been engraved, and the two colossal-winged "cherubims" who stood over them, reaching with their outstretched pinions from one wall to the other. Within the Holy Place were the tables for the shew-bread, the altar of incense, and much of the furniture used on great ceremonial occasions.

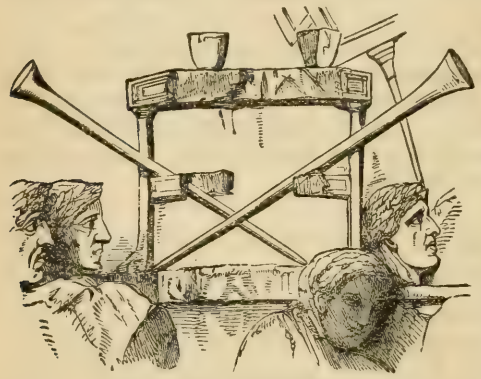


TABLE OF SHEW-BREAD.
From Bas-Relief on the arch of Titus.

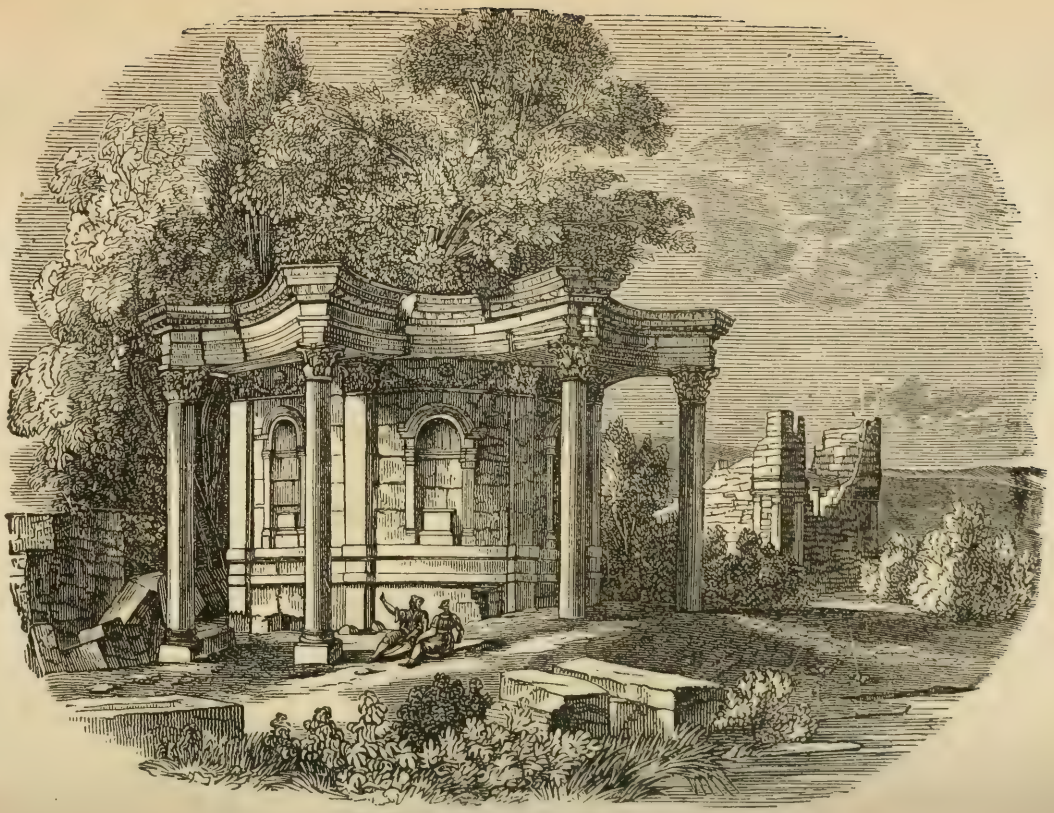
The chief feature of the temple was the gold which was used in plating its floor and its sides. This must have been visible from a great distance, and any one standing even on the shores of the Jordan and in the immediate neighborhood of the Dead Sea, must have been able to have caught the bright reflection of the burnished temple walls at Jerusalem. And it gave a costliness to the structure too, which must have made it renowned throughout the world. No doubt the build-

ing of Solomon's temple and the other edifices constructed at the same time, must have been the great event of that age. The fame of them must have reached not only to Egypt, but have extended throughout the countries on the Tigris and the Euphrates. It might have gone, and probably did, to Greece, and it is not impossible that the Parthenon was the direct architectural outgrowth of the temple at Jerusalem. Wherever Tyrian ships went there must have been a knowledge of the wonderful works of Solomon.

Of that renowned temple, only a part of the foundation stones remain. Those gigantic blocks which underlie the pavement of the Mosque of Omar, and which attract universal attention and win universal admiration, are unquestionably the product of Solomon's age. The largest of them measure about twenty-nine and a half feet long, and are of proportionate depth and breadth. They are but about half the length, however, of the stupendous blocks at Baalbeck, whose size is the wonder of the world. The quarries from which the Jerusalem stones were taken were partly at Bethlehem, and partly from directly under the northern part of the present city. Near the Damascus, or northern gate, a subterranean passage has been discovered recently, which guides to the very quarry whence the huge blocks were taken for Solomon's Temple; and in the sides, one can see even now the great vacant spaces which correspond with the stones still to be seen in the wall of the harem. It is one of the most curious sights in all the round of modern travel, the very chippings of the masons as



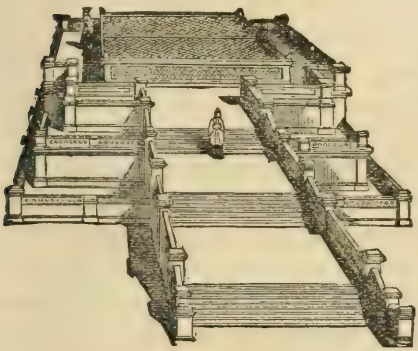
GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.



TEMPLE AT BAALBEC, OR BAULATH.

they worked out the massive blocks for the foundations of the temple.

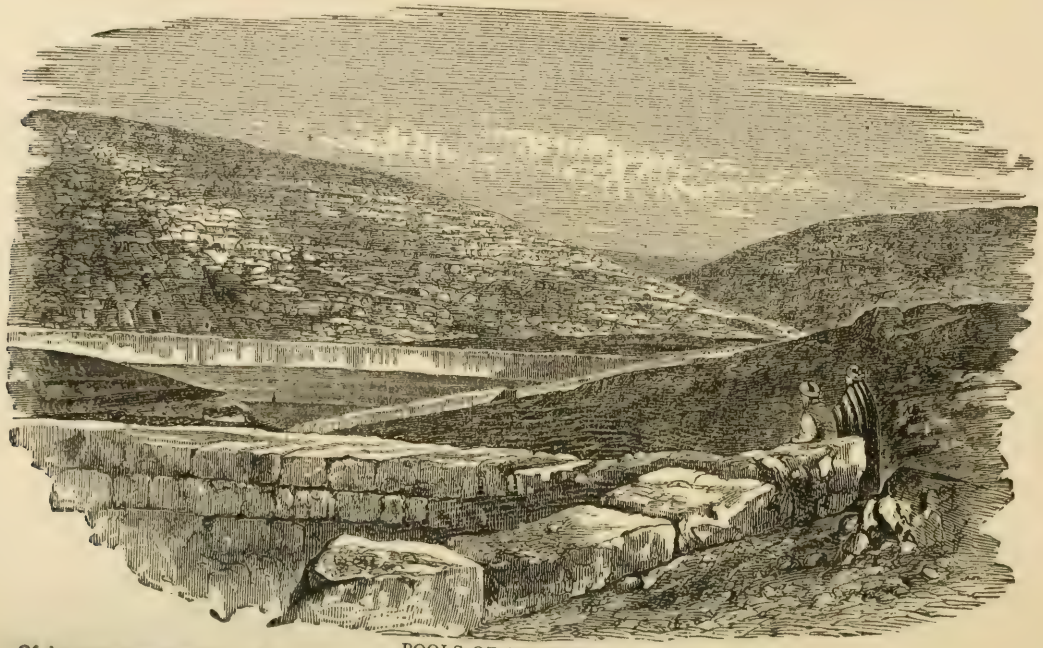
The temple was not the only one of Solomon's magnificent structures; for in addition to the temple whose proportions were by no means extensive, as has already been seen, he erected hard by, although on a site not fully known to us, a palace, which although not described with great minuteness, must have been one of the wonders of that age. It was a composite structure, and cannot be perfectly imagined, inasmuch as no detailed description has been given to us. It consisted of three chief parts, the Armoury, or as it is called in the Bible, the House of the Forest of Lebanon, deriving its name doubtless from the cedar wood which entered into its structure; the Porch of Pillars, doubtless the most costly and magnificent part of the whole, and the place where the King sat on occasions of state, and gave judgment. Besides these, and occupying another site of the spacious court, was the mansion or palace erected solely for the use of the Egyptian princess whom he had married, and who became the first in all his long list of queens. Besides these palaces was doubtless the general harem and the edifices devoted to the King and the officers of the court. Into the structure of this congeries of magnificent palaces, gold and costly woods entered as freely as into the temple. The time occupied by the erection of the palace was greater by four years than had been needed for the temple, the latter requiring but seven years, the former no less than eleven. It must have been the won-



ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING.

der of the age. We have no reason to believe that Egypt or any of the powers then existing on the Euphrates and Tigris, produced at that epoch, anything to be compared with the structures which Solomon erected. The sacred writer descants with evident enthusiasm upon the glories of the work, the like of which no page of his national history could show, and the like of which no land on the earth could boast.

In addition to these works in the city of Jerusalem, Solomon did much to adorn the immediate suburbs, besides building a summer palace up on the Lebanon mountains, whence he could withdraw from the heats of his capital. In Wady Urtas, near Bethlehem, and at Etam, hard by, can be seen the remains of Solomon's magnificent works; the aqueduct which carried water to Jerusalem, the huge tanks or reservoirs in which he husbanded his supplies for the irrigation of his gardens there. These have been fully described by Dr. Robinson, and others who have written with detail regarding the antiquities of Palestine. The aqueduct which Solomon built was afterwards repaired by Pontius Pilate, in the time of our Savior. It afterwards fell into great neglect, but was at length restored by one of the Mahometan governers of Jerusalem, and made to do duty again. Its course can be traced nearly all the way, and very interesting explorations have been made of late years, to discover where it entered the city and how the water was distributed for the purposes of general supply. But of Solomon's fine roads which he constructed in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, no traces remain. The luxuriance of Wady Urtas tells the story faintly of the gardens in which he once delighted, and whose fragrance fills the song which bears Solomon's name; but his driveways have all been allowed to pass into their old roughness. Had the neighborhood of Jerusalem been less intractable than it is, the works which he laid out beyond the walls of his capital would have been more extensive than they were; for no city of note exists in the world, I suppose, whose immediate neighborhood offers less inducement to the gardener than



POOLS OF SOLOMON.

Of the various pools mentioned in Scripture these are probably the most celebrated. They are hewn out of the rock, partly built of masonry and lined with cement.

does that of Jerusalem. Only the resources of Solomon could have affected anything in such a tangled mass of rocks. Yet that he had his driveways and his gardens is plain, but we find little now which bears the marks of his hand.

Besides these works of art he was busily engaged in completing strong fortifications, erected at just the points where he was most assailable. One of these was Hazor, a place which long ago claimed our attention in connection with Joshua, and which was the head-quarters of two armies which under the command of two kings, both bearing the family name of Jabin, resisted the arms of Israel. Lying as it unquestionably did at the sources of the Jordan, and beneath the snow crest of the mighty Hermon, it was the strategic point which must be taken by an army coming from Damascus and the country adjacent. All such armies must pass the southern limit of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges, and hence the refortification of Hazor. One was Tadmor, a place which is supposed to be identical with the later Palmyra, and which, if so, lay on the great caravan route between Palestine and the Euphrates. The fortification of Tadmor would defend the kingdom from any unexpected attacks on the east. On the south-west he built Gezer, near the Egyptian frontier, and refortified Bethoron the Nether, which lay at the western outlet of the most important pass from Jerusalem down into the plain of Philistia. At the base of the northern edge of the gentle hills of Manasseh, where they touch the plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon, he fortified Migiddo, and so made Jerusalem secure, in case an army should press by Hazor, far to the north. Besides this he strengthened the citadel of Jerusalem, bearing the name of Millo, whose precise situation and character are unknown to us.

In order to accomplish his great works Solomon drew not only upon his own subjects, but still more upon the ancient tribes of the land. Not even under David had any very severe burdens been laid upon the primitive races of Palestine, the Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, and Amorites, etc.; they had

been treated very leniently, paying some tribute to their nominal masters, but not ground down to any estate of degrading servitude. But under Solomon all this was changed; and while we see but 30,000 Israelites compelled to work in Lebanon, in getting out cedars for the temple, and these in relays of 10,000, working a month each, the original population of the country was drafted to the amount of 153,000, and compelled to work without intermission.

The establishment of a navy in the Red Sea was one of the great acts of Solomon's reign. The range of mountains lying between the Dead Sea, and the eastern arm of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Akabah, had been subjugated by David, and there was no opposition on the part of the surviving Edomites to the employment of caravans to traverse the Arabah valley, and bring into Palestine whatever merchandise might be brought by ship from the East and landed at the northern extremity of the Red Sea. At that point lay the two towns of Ezion-geber and Elath, known as places of encampment as far back as the time of the Forty Years' Wandering, but never emerging above the place of squalid villages. Now, however, they were promoted to higher uses. They became ports of departure for India, and thither Hiram sent artisans to construct a fleet for Solomon, and sailors to man it when it should be completed. Hitherto the Phœnicians had extended their voyages westward to the various ports of the Mediterranean, but now they could use a part of their maratime resources in traversing the Indian Ocean. It was of course a gain to both Solomon and Hiram. The Hebrew king gained by this means access to the richest parts of the East, and the Tyrian monarch shared in the wealth which was thus brought into the country. It was the opening of a great chapter in the story of Solomon's magnificence. True, Egypt, Tyre, and Syria had done much for him; but they had not been able to sate his thirst for gold, spices, and all kinds of costly ornaments and articles of luxury. These must be drawn from India. And to this end the construction of a fleet was indispensable.

With this fleet Solomon was able to receive the riches of the East, and to carry on a protracted commerce with Ophir. And where, the reader will enquire, was Ophir? Many answers have been given to this question. Some have gone so far in ridiculous hypotheses as to suppose that it was Peru; that the second syllable of Ophir is to be found retained in the first syllable of Peru. But such a supposition is evidently absurd. More reasonable by far, were the conjectures which were held during the past century, that Ophir lay in the southern and most fruitful part of Arabia and on the eastern coast of Africa. But the impulse which has been given of late to the study of the Sanscrit language, has led to results not contemplated by the orientalists who led the way in that department. It has been found that the list of foreign products mentioned as imported by Solomon are described partly in terms foreign to the purest Hebrew, and only existing on the western coast of India. Besides this, to confirm the same, the things themselves are not of Arabian or African, but of Indian origin, and can at the present day be found only on the western coast of India and in the islands of Sumatra and Ceylon. The gold of the Indus valley is a regular article of commerce at the present day; while the almug or sandal-wood, apes, peacocks, spices and ivory are among the regular articles of commerce of the East Indies. The situation of Ophir cannot be limited to any one spot; it was a word, without doubt, of large meaning, and covered no less a tract than the western coast of Hindoostan, and some of the great islands contiguous to that peninsula.

Tarshish proper was no doubt Spain and the countries adjacent; and from Palestine a trade went out thither as well as to Ophir in the remote East. Yet when the term "Ships of Tarshish" is used, it is not simply in all probability, ships which necessarily sailed to Tarshish, for we have an allusion to "Ships of Tarshish" leaving the port of Ezion Geber, and we know that that port lay on the Red Sea. The name seems to have been used to indicate any large, first-class ships, just

as the word East Indiaman is used in England at the present time. This is the only solution for the difficulty of dealing with ships of Tarshish which sailed from Ezion Geber, and which could have nothing, whatever, to have done with the Mediterranean. There used to be, and that not many years ago, a theory prevalent with the learned, that there were two places



HYSSOP.

bearing the name of Tarshish, one in the west, and the other in the east; but scholars are now swinging round to the conviction that the expression, ships of Tarshish may be called Tarshish-ships, and that it merely means, large, first-class vessels, such as used to be sent out from Tyre to Spain.

Of Sheba, the home of the princess whose visit to Solomon

occupies so prominent a page in the history of that time, little need be said. It was a rich and fertile province in southern Arabia, and its queen must have commanded resources of no mean extent. Indeed the extreme productivity of Arabia Felix was so much in advance of even the most fertile parts of Palestine, that the monarch of such a tract must have been able in point of wealth to have not only vied with, but to have undoubtedly surpassed the lord of so hilly and hard a tract as that which constituted a large part of Solomon's. The visit, therefore, of the Queen of Sheba was no mean event; and in the astonishment which she exhibited at the magnificence of the Hebrew king, we have the strongest tribute to the place which in point of splendor, Solomon held among his contemporaries. The half had not been told her, not only his wisdom, reaching even to the "hyssop on the wall," also his many dark riddles and mysterious sayings amazed her, but the magnitude of his edifices and the prodigality of his expenditures, all caused her to wonder.

It can hardly lie within my province to enter upon a discussion of the minute details of Solomon's administration. It began with great splendor, but its later years were much clouded in. His marriage into many of the nations around him, brought into the capital many women whose religion was utterly unlike that of the Hebrews, and caused idolatry to become prevalent. The hill lying south-east of the city, now known as the Mount of Offence, was then covered with the shrines which were erected to these false gods. The luxury and the profligacy which became prevalent at that time, the extremely numerous marriages of the king, the situation of Jerusalem, away from the centre of the nation, and where it could not be in sympathy with the northern tribes, all tended to break up the nation; and the monstrously developed taste of the king for magnificence aided in the same work, for it caused the country at large to be impoverished, in order that the capital might be enriched. And when at last foes sprang up on the south and on the north, Hadad among the moun-

tains of Edom, and Rezon on the plains of Syria, the Hebrew monarch found his power gone. These two able men were able to not only throw off Solomon's yoke, but also to cut off several of his most important communications: that with the Euphrates on the north-east, and that with the Red Sea on the south. All was ripe for rebellion, and when at last it breaks upon us in the attempt of the able and determined Jereboam, the son of Nebat, it does not take us by surprise. We only wonder that the King was able to suppress it and cause the rebel to fly for safety to Egypt. This was but the preparation for the end, and not long after Solomon passed away, and his name has been a dishonored one from that day to this.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TWO KINGDOMS—REHOBOAM AND JEROBOAM.

Change at this Point in the Character of Kings and Chronicles—Crisis at the Close of Solomon's Reign—Rehoboam Inherits his Father's Love of Splendor—His Mother—The Council at Shechem—An Abrupt Break—Jeroboam's Origin—Resemblance Between Jeroboam and the First Napoleon—His Education in Egypt—His Great Deeds—An Egyptian Invasion—Artificiality of Rehoboam's Character—Extent of the Northern Compared with that of the Southern Kingdom—The Isolation of the Southern Kingdom its best Safeguard—Jeroboam's Want of Religion—He Organizes a State Religion for the "Masses"—Philosophy which Underlay the Worship of the Bullock—The Homage Paid to Nature—Apotheosis of Men—No Binding Force in his State Religion—The Doom of the House of Jeroboam—Tumults and Conspiracies—Zimri, and his Seven Days' Reign—Omri—Abijah—Asa.

 ITH the close of Solomon's career, there is an immediate divergence in the character of the books of Kings and Chronicles. The former contains the record of the monarchs of both Judah and Israel; the latter only of the Kings of Judah, and alluding to the contemporaries of the northern kingdom only when they came into conflict with the southern power. There appears to have once been a work exclusively devoted to the kings of Israel; but that work has perished, and we know of it only by the casual references to it in the Bible. The books of Kings as we have them are far less interesting than those of Chronicles; for the account of the two rival kingdoms is so mixed, and the transitions are so sudden from the one to the other, that the reader's mind is in a complete blur. But it is not so with the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. There the narrative flows easily and naturally on, with few breaks or abrupt transitions, and with casual references to the northern nation. The

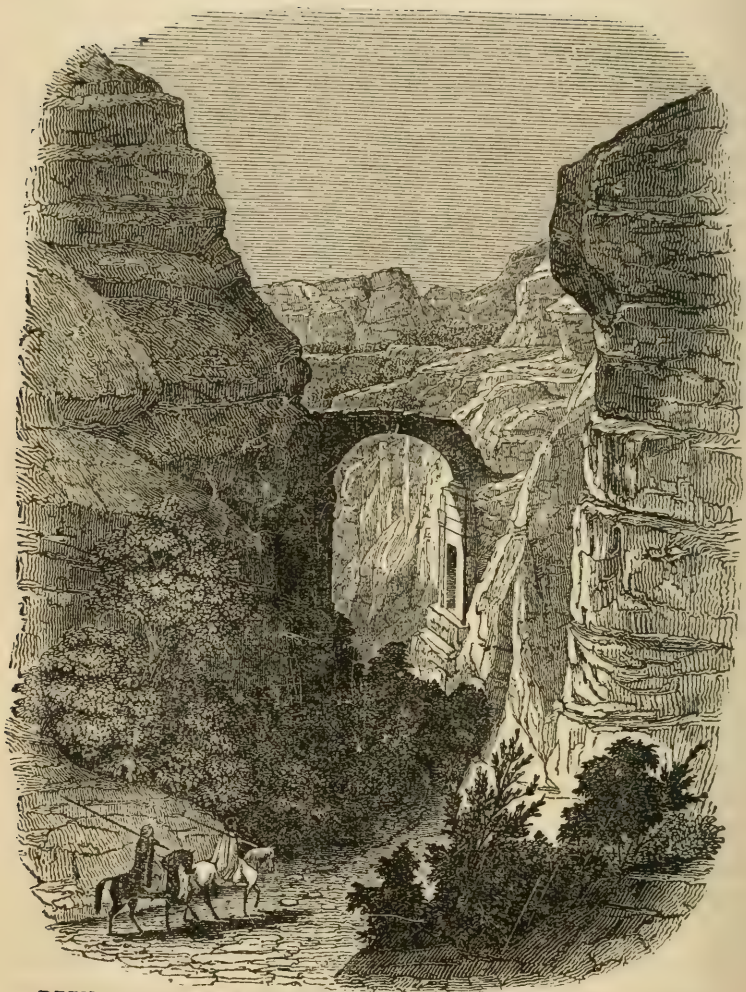
"Kings" reads as a history of France and England would read, if the two were discussed under one head, as they were in the time of the Plantaganets; the Chronicles as the history would read if taken by itself, with fitting allusions to the contemporaneous history of France.

The close of Solomon's reign was followed by an immediate crisis. Rehoboam, his son, seems to have inherited his father's love of splendor, and more than his father's imperious nature. His mother was a foreigner, a woman of the Ammonites, and his first religious impressions must therefore have come from both the true faith of his paternal ancestors, and the false rites which he saw practised by his mother and her friends. His youth was spent, moreover, in the midst of the luxury and profligacy of his father's court, at a time when a young man would almost necessarily be spoiled by the temptations through which he must wade. On his accession it was but natural, therefore, that the qualities thus gained should show themselves. And they did at once. The going to Shechem for the coronation may not have resulted from any pressure on the part of the northern tribes, but once there, he was in the midst of a hostile country. The people came up to meet him, but their first cry was for a diminution of the burdens to which they had been subjected by Solomon. He had grown up in the company of two different classes of counselors, old men who had been the advisers of his father, and young men who had grown up with himself, and had been subjected to the same influences which had formed his own character. The account of the interview is so graphically given in the sacred narrative that it would be in vain to attempt to improve upon it: "And King Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. But he forsook the counsel

of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the King had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. And the King answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. Wherefore the King hearkened not unto the people: for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. So when all Israel saw that the King hearkened not unto them, the people answered the King, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore King Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. And it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that

they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only."

The break was abrupt and decisive. Jeroboam who had been unable to unseat Solomon, returned from his long residence in Egypt, bringing his wife, an Egyptian princess. By this marriage the houses of the Edomite Hadad, Solomon and Jeroboam were closely united, as they had all three married into the same princely Egyptian family. The same force which Jeroboam showed in his youth, the same ambition which made him, the son of Nebat and a man of the people, the husband of an Egyptian princess, and carried him in every regard to the highest stations of the state, remained his to the last. People are apt to confound Rehoboam and Jeroboam, to think that they were both of about equal importance, to remember that one was the son of Solomon and the other was not, and not to care much which was; but there was a mighty difference between the two. Rehoboam was essentially a common kind of man, having a kind of stubborn and stupid self-will, a senseless love of finery and parade, and but very little of his father's mental scope and larger gifts. Jeroboam was a kind of Napoleon: atheistic in his religion, full of ambition, force, and intellect; a man whose history can be studied with as much profit as that of any character in the Bible. Returning from Egypt it was seen at once that he was the man to head the revolt, and he it was, who was by common consent made the king of the northern tribes. He became at once as great a builder as David had been. His first step was to fortify Shechem and make it his capital; his next to go across the Jordan and convert that ancient Penuel, the place of Jacob's wrestling, and of so many subsequent striking events, into a strong outpost. For many generations men looked back to him as a great builder, and celebrated his fame. It was not so with his rival. Rehoboam did nothing of the sort. He fled from Shechem to Jerusalem after the revolt, and remained there. He pretended to adhere to the



DEFILE IN IDUMÆA, IN THE ROAD FROM PALESTINE TO EGYPT.
Exhibiting the physical character of Edom, the home of Hadad.
From Laborde.

old faith, and had rites of worship celebrated in the temple; yet his capital was full of idolatries, and of the sins which were connected with them, and became a more shameless city than even Solomon had left it.

In the fifth year of his reign there was an Egyptian invasion. The name of the leader is given as Shishak, and on the walls of the ruined temple of Karnak at Thebes, the traveler may still see what is believed to be the name of this monarch, and those of the cities in Palestine which he took and sacked. Hard by these names stand the portraits of his chief prisoners, men with strikingly Jewish countenances, and almost beyond question the representation of distinguished Jews. The Egyptians do not seem to have been cruel in their personal treatment of Rehoboam; they appear to have converted him into a tributary prince, to have compelled him to pay them a large sum of money, and also to surrender the costly vessels and ornaments of gold which were in the temple. As an indication of the false and artificial character of the man, it is enough to notice the sham parade of the brazen shields which took the place of Solomon's golden ones. Whenever the king went into the temple, the guard took the brazen shields and preceded the king, and in this theatrical fashion, Rehoboam was obliged to supply the want of the real insignia of dignity with cheap buckram.

There is a prevalent impression that the extent of the territory of the northern kingdom was much greater than that of the southern kingdom, and that its resources were much superior. There is no question that in mere extent of territory this was the case; and it is equally certain that in fertility the northern part of Palestine must have been then as now, far in advance of the southern. Yet there were some compensating advantages to Judah. At the time of the disruption, Philistia was a part of the southern kingdom. It had been conquered at last; and although David had committed the great mistake of not reconstructing it, peopling it with his own nation, and making it homogeneous with the hill-country

in respect to its population and civilization, still it might be reckoned as a part of the southern kingdom. But better still, Judah still controlled the land of Edom and the ports on the Red Sea. Here was the inlet of the gold and silver which made the wealth of Solomon and Rehoboam. It was this which made the southern kingdom the rival of the northern in outward splendor, and the time had not come then when people could look much further than to outward splendor.

And so too, the isolation of the southern kingdom was a great safeguard, and a compensation of much importance, when set over against the unguarded district of the north. The kingdom of Israel was open to every invader, who might choose to enter it on the north or north-east; and in the rapid development at that time of the kingdom of Syria, with Damascus as its capital, the Ten Tribes were in great peril. Indeed as early as the reign of Baasha, the second from Jeroboam, an alliance was entered into by the King of Judah, with the ruler of Syria, and an invasion was made by the latter into the northern districts of Israel, the tract around Hermon and the sources of the Jordan. But Judah was quite safe. Shut in by a wilderness on the south and east, and with its rival on the north, it could suffer but little from pagan nations. Rehoboam did yield it is true, to the power of Shishak, the Egyptian King, but Asa, his grandson, who was threatened by Zerah, with a great host of African soldiers, was able to rush down from the mountains and sweep the whole invading army clean away. On the whole, taken in respect to its isolation, its rocky fastnesses, its outlet to the treasures of Ophir and the East, its dominion over the territory of Edom and Philistia, there was not much to choose between Judah and Israel. In respect to the danger to be apprehended from idolatry, the northern kingdom was much the most in peril. Living on such easy terms with the Phœnicians, and under Syrian influence as well, it easily lapsed into heathen customs, and forsook its God.

The most remarkable feature in the character of Jeroboam

was his want of religion. He was what we should call an atheist, for brought up amid the decaying religion of his ancestors, and then transplanted to the soil of Egypt, he was robbed of all faith, and like Napoleon, got so far at last, as merely to believe in religion as a kind of conservative influence, an efficient auxiliary of the police. He reacted so far from the primitive faith of his land, as to expel all the Levites, and to establish a priesthood based on his own will, accepting as priests those who were rich enough to make a liberal contribution to his stores. He abolished the old festival days of the church, retaining only one, the Feast of Tabernacles, and that one, not out of religious feeling, but knowing that it was important to the continuance of his power, that at stated times the people should come together and pay their homage to their king. But though retaining the ancient Feast of the Tabernacles, he changed the day on which it was celebrated, to "the month which he had desired in his own heart." Though thoroughly irreligious himself, yet seeing that the public neglect of religion by himself was very prejudicial to his interests, and that all the people who formed his best reliance were leaving him and going to the southern kingdom, where there was at least a show of deference for Jehovah, he established a state ceremonial, and setting up two calves in Bethel and Dan, which were both places of ancient sanctity, he bade the people come and worship them. This act of Jeroboam has been commonly misunderstood; and some have gone so far as to say that having married an Egyptian princess and being himself colored with the religious notions of the country where he had sojourned for a long time, he brought back with him the Mnevis worship of that land. This explanation of his conduct is not tenable. The worship of the calf or bullock would not have been acceptable to the people if they had seen in it anything Egyptian. From the very first they loathed the religious rites of the nation under which their ancestors had so long been in bondage. But the worship of the bullock was common among eastern nations and had a deep

significance. In it we can even now see the spiritual side of idolatry; for it is not to be supposed that the worship of idols rests on nothing spiritual. In all cases those who have established idol worship have justified it by some such plea as the Romanist justifies the adoration of images, viz: that the worshiper regards the idol as the impersonation of certain qualities of nature which are admirable and worthy of human reverence. Now the bullock, among an agricultural community, represents the patience and the strength of nature; strong and patient is that creature; and these two qualities seen in the beast which serves man best, became in the dawning ages of the world, the subjects of his highest worship. In a time like this we pay an homage to a different class of qualities; we admire cunning, grasp, energy; and the feeling with which we regard the possessors of such qualities, and strive to imitate them, is not far removed from that with which men in a simpler time, produced in outward form that to which they gave the adoration of their soul. In the act of Jeroboam we see the origin of idolatry; we see it in its nascent state, detect its roots, and see how they grow up in the soul. The feeling with which most Americans contemplate the character of Washington, is not far removed from the admiration which made the Romans worship Julius Cæsar; and many a Christian man is living in our time who had he lived a thousand years ago and been as good as he is now and no better, would have been made a saint, and his name would have been written with St. before it, and a day would have been set apart to commemorate his birth. The characteristics which we find in ourselves are just such, as pushed out in another and simpler age, make open and confirmed idolatry.

There is this instructive lesson to be learned from Jeroboam, that when any pinch came, his new state religion did not hold him, he fell right back upon the faith of his fathers. When he had built an altar for Nature-worship, and a true prophet had come up from Judah and made that memorable appeal, not to the King who stood by, but to the altar itself,



ALTAR OF INCENSE.

The general aspect, doubtless, of the one which Jeroboam reared.

(I. Kings xiii. 2,) the story reveals enough to show that the rebuke which the King received, compelled him to acknowledge the God of his fathers. And still more conspicuously when his favorite child was sick, he sought relief at the hand of God, sending his wife in disguise to seek help of a true prophet. These things show us that men never escape, in times of extremity, the lessons which they once learned at their mother's knee, and that in their time of trouble they always fall back upon the God of their fathers.

The doom predicted upon the house of Jeroboam was rigidly fulfilled; his whole family perished, and his son had a brief and inglorious reign. And indeed the reader cannot fail to note the brief and tempest-tossed dynasties of the northern kingdom, compared with the more stable dynasty of the south. There son followed father for many generations, and the race of David was long perpetuated, as if in fulfillment of the ancient promise. But it was not so in the northern kingdom. The history of those first reigns is like that of Rome under the most degraded emperors. Jeroboam reigned twenty-two years, and was followed by Nadab his son, who held the throne but two years, when he was supplanted by his own captain, the powerful and warlike Baasha. He kept up a long and wasting war with Asa, the King of Judah, and at length was followed by his son the unimportant Elah, who reigned but two years. He was supplanted by his own General, Zimri, who reigned but seven days, and was assassinated in a drunken debauch, and was followed by a man whom the army chose, Omri. The comparison between this and the Flavian dynasty at Rome has been pointed out and is most instructive. In the southern kingdom, affairs were much more stable. Rehoboam was followed by his son, the powerful and warlike Abijah, whose name would have been much more prominent had he lived more than three years after his accession. Still he was soldier enough to encounter and overthrow the mighty Jeroboam himself. Abijah was followed by his son Asa, a shrewd and politic prince, who reigned forty-one

years. Though not an epoch of splendor, it was one of prosperity. He was, as just remarked, a shrewd and politic prince, and although the son of a heathen woman, he saw the drift of things in the northern kingdom clearly enough to discover that should he not make way with the idolatrous rites of his own capital, Judah and Jerusalem would be doomed with the same curse which was falling on Israel. I think that although he has been thought to be an eminently "pious" monarch, sagacity had as much to do with the reformation he effected, as did piety. His giving away of the sacred vessels of the temple to the King of Syria in order to purchase an alliance with him against Baasha, the King of Israel, was not done as David would have done. And when Hanani the prophet rebuked him for this, and reminded him that at the time of the impending Ethiopian invasion, simple reliance on God had given him the victory, he did not do as David did when Nathan said, "Thou art the man," but cast the aged Hanani into prison. This act stands almost alone in the whole course of Hebrew history. The sacred character of the prophets was always their best protection against even the king; and almost never, except in the case of Asa, was this sacred prerogative forgotten.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AHAB AND ELIJAH—JEHOSHAPHAT.

Ahab Surpasses even Jeroboam in Wickedness—His Marriage with Jezebel—The Worship of Foreign Images comes in—The Adoration of Baal an Apotheosis of Power—Parallel Between the Ideas of Ancient Idolaters and those Current Among Ourselves—The Brilliant and Festive Character of much of the "Divine Worship" of Our Day—A Falling Away from the Grave and Earnest Spirit of Moses and His Successors—The Character of Jezebel—The Rites She Introduced—Elijah Starts, as it were from the Ground—His Training—His Rough, Wild, Ungracious Ways—Contrast Between Eastern and Western Palestine—Thunder in a Clear Sky—Ahab's First Rebuke—Suddenness of Elijah's Moves—Scenes where He Appears—He is Always at Hand when Needed—Hopes that he would Again Visit this Earth—Mendelssohn's Elijah—War Between Ahab and the King of Syria—The Reign of Ahab Almost Unconnected with that of His Contemporary, Jehoshaphat—The Great Deeds of the Latter King—He Revives the Glories of Solomon.

THE reign of Ahab over the northern kingdom is one of the most instructive in the entire annals of Hebrew history. Succeeding the inferior line of monarchs who followed Jeroboam and walked in his footsteps, Ahab went even beyond them all in wickedness. His marriage with Jezebel, the daughter of a Phœnician prince, Ethbaal, inaugurated, or rather, gave official sanction to the idolatrous habits of Ahab and his whole people. With Jeroboam, the worship of the calves had been more of a state religion, and although it was idolatry in point of fact, yet it was intended as a means of deceiving the people, and of causing them to believe that in this disguised form, they were still rendering their worship to Jehovah. But during the reign of Ahab the religion of the state took an entirely different turn; open and avowed worship of foreign images was ush-

ered in and had official sanction, and Baal took the place of Jehovah. We often think that that worship of Baal was something to which nothing in our modern life and thought corresponds; but this is not so: the worship of Baal was simply the apotheosis of power. If we in this age who worship power in any form, who really in our spirits do homage to intellect, or financial success, or commanding will,—if we should merely put our idea into form, and represent power either in marble, or on canvass, or in ivory, or wood, or bronze, we should be doing just what the ancient Phœnicians did.



HEAD AND WHOLE FIGURE OF PHŒNICIAN BAAL.
From Coins in the British Museum.

Jehovah, the invisible God, represented purity, truth, goodness, those supreme and ineffable qualities which if men believe in and worship, steal over the human soul with a great and rich blessing; but Baal represented that quality the deification of which is the deification of self, and the exaltation of which is a kind of idolatry which utterly unfits the human soul for rising to any higher pitch of excellence than lies within itself and the horizon of its own thought. Those ancient people were wonderfully like ourselves; human nature has not changed; and it is a very instructive lesson that we

learn when we go behind the scenes, and see in the Old Testament the working of the same instincts which are powerful in ourselves. And that worship of Baal which seems to us something utterly unlike what we call "religious worship," was probably not much different in nature from that light, festal, tasteful and in some cases frivolous pretext for worship which is only too prevalent in our large cities and towns at the present day. We who have seen the serious, earnest, grave and almost severe manner in which our fathers paid God their homage, changed for the æsthetic ceremonials which now find their favored home in our churches, can have a good idea of the manner in which the earnest Jehovah worship was merged into the gay and intoxicating rites which were celebrated in honor of Baal, the Power-god. The music which is often sung in the churches of France, and which has become too familiar in our own Protestant places of worship, is probably of the same character with that which was sung in the gatherings of the Hebrews, after Ahab and Jezebel had introduced the Tyrian ritual.

With this decadence in the religious idea, with this falling away from the grave and earnest spirit of Moses and his successors, came a like decadence in morality. All through the line of the monarchs of Israel we discover that a want of religion is the true concomitant of a want of good morals. The general profligacy of Ahab, had its reflex in his want of religious faith. His natural profligacy was of course mightily strengthened by his union with the infamous Jezebel, whose name will go down, like that of Lady Macbeth, to an immortality of disgrace. She was far the superior of her husband in grasp, force, courage, and probably in intellectual resources; while in sin she was even more strikingly his master. There is something satanic in Jezebel, and if Deborah, the ancient prophetess has a kind of grandeur of her own, Jezebel is not inferior in the same. By her power and personal prestige she had made the Baal worship universal in Israel; the devotees of the ancient faith had all been subjected to one grand per-

secution not fully described, but only hinted at in the sacred narrative; a magnificent temple had been erected at Samaria in honor of Baal; very near Jezreel there was a grove dedicated to her national divinities; and what with the splendor of the vestments worn by the Phœnician priests, and the intoxicating nature of the sensuous, and it would seem lascivious rites which she introduced, the nation was fairly bewitched, and yielded without much struggling to the persecution and banishment of those who remained true to Jehovah.

In such a time as this arose Elijah, starting out of the very ground, as it were, like an apparition. Who he was we know not, who his father and mother were we know not; all we know about him is that he was a man of Gilead; that his training had been in the wild ravines east of the Jordan, and that in his dress and manner he had all the savage characteristics of a Gadite. He would appear to us, were we to see him, a perfect Bedouin. We can not imagine Abraham save as a kind and winning and perfectly polite Arab Sheikh; we think of his as a mild eye, and imagine that his bearing was as courtly as was that of the old Sheikh Saleh who escorted Robinson through the Sinaitic desert. But Elijah the Tishbite—whatever that expression may mean, for no one knows—was an angular man; his whole action hard and ungracious, his whole language rude and uncompromising, his whole nature fiery and volcanic. In outward appearance he was rough even to an extreme. Even in his day the contrast between the manners of Palestine east of the Jordan, and Western Palestine was greater than now exists between the manners of Massachusetts and Arkansas; and Elijah was an extreme example even of Eastern Palestine. He was well known by his dress and appearance; probably tall, he wore his hair notoriously long, he had for his chief garment a rough sheepskin mantle, with which he sometimes enveloped his face, and which he sometimes wore over his body. This with the leathern girdle common among all Bedouins, completed his attire; and yet it might be matched by that of many a wild Arab at

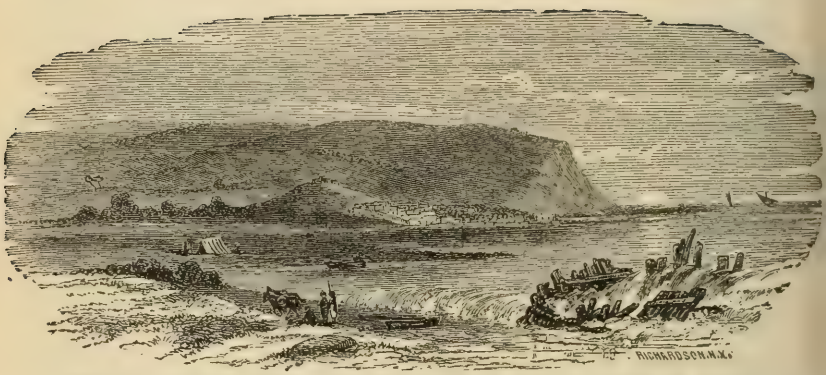
the present day. His appearance west of the Jordan must have always been disagreeable; he was so harsh, so uncouth, so violent, so uncompromising; but when he dared to rise up like a ghost in the very court of the voluptuous and effeminate King, and hurl at him his hard and stern words, the spectacle must have been one to arouse the whole nation.

Not more unexpectedly does the thunder break in upon us on a summer's day, than does Elijah appear in the story of Ahab's reign. And Mendelssohn has well caught the spirit of this, in the opening of that most finished and harmonious of modern oratorios, his Elijah, in causing the first strain to be, not as in all other pieces of the same character, the orchestral overture, but to be the clear, plangent tenor of Elijah himself, breaking the silence with the well-known words, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to thy word." It was the first great rebuke which Ahab had experienced. It was the ushering in of that succession of calamities which were to end in the tragic fate of both himself and wife. And after this the sacred narrative runs on in a most attractive way, presenting snatches of private history, giving us glimpses into the life and customs of that day, but always keeping us in busy remembrance of God's fidelity to his servant, and his abomination of wickedness.

Uncertain like the birthplace of Elijah are all his appearances upon the field. He jumps about like a flea; we get a glimpse of him in one place and presently he is gone, only to appear at a most unexpected moment in quite a different quarter. Now he is by the brook Chrilb "before" *i. e.* east of the Jordan, not down by Jericho as Robinson supposes, but amid the fastnesses of Gilead; anon he emerges into view at Zarephoth on the western slope of the Lebanon, and near Tyre; now he is at Beersheba, on the very southern confines of Judah; now he is near Damascus; and again he is at Carmel or on the plain of Jezreel. But wherever he comes from, he always makes his appearance at just the hour when God

has a word for him to say or a deed to do. Whenever there is a great truth to be revealed, such as the providence of God, the silent working of God, God's rebuke of sin, God's faithfulness to his son, there is Elijah ready to hear and by word or deed to interpret the divine voice to men. Of the impression which he made upon his age we get no adequate idea. When standing on the eastern brow of Carmel and confronting the eight hundred and fifty priests of Baal and Ashtaroth, with their self-confidence, gay costumes, and popular favor, he reasserted the sovereignty of Jehovah, he made an impression on the age which was never lost. The purest, honestest, simplest character in the Old Testament, he stood out so prominently as the central figure of his time, that the impression he made never passed away, and inspired his nation with the hope that he would return some day to reinspire the popular heart. Malachi, the last of the prophets, closes the Old Testament with the prediction that that grand old prophet shall come again to re-establish Israel; and when after a long tract of silence, the New Testament history emerges, we still have more thinking of Elijah and his return; and even in the faint and imperfectly understood mutterings of the Saviour on the cross, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani; the people who stood around thought that he was calling Elijah to come to his relief.

There is no need that I should rehearse here the incidents of Elijah's life; they have been told in language of inimitable beauty and simplicity in the Bible; and have in our time been made fresh by the frequent rendering of that grand work of Christian art, Mendelssohn's 'Elijah." The stories in which his name occurs are among the earliest to kindle the interest of children; and as we grow up, so their scope enlarges upon the mind, and we discover new beauties in them as long as we live. The widow's barrel and cruise, the great appeal on Carmel to Jehovah and Baal, the wonderful revelation in the still small voice on Horeb, the breaking in upon Ahab after the killing of Naboth, as appalling as the appearing of the ghost of Banquo, all these underlie the grandest truths of the



MOUNT CARMEL FROM THE NORTH, WITH THE VILLAGE OF HAIFA.

On this mount Elijah proposed a test to the priests of Baal to ascertain who was the true God; and Elijah was answered by God, to the confusion of those priests. He afterwards slew thirty of them at the Brook Kishon.

Bible, and yet are like the language of childhood in the masterful simplicity of their narration. There is no part of the Bible where the young and the old drink so manifestly out of the same spring, as in the story of Elijah.

During the life-time of this prophet, but apparently without much connection, occurred the war between Ahab and Benhadad, the powerful King of Syria, a country no longer of second rate importance, but rapidly emerging into the front rank. In this war, however, Ahab was victorious, and wrung from his invader some valuable privileges. That war is of but little interest to us however; it is entirely thrown into the shade by the tragic invasion of Eastern Palestine three years later, when Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah, joined his forces with those of Ahab to go over and rescue the city of Remoth, in Gilead, from the hand of the Syrian King. The prophecy had already been sounded in Ahab's ears that the dogs that had licked the blood of Naboth, should lick his blood; and the King was most anxious to avert the doom. It was all in vain, however. Not all his precautions saved his life; though he went into battle with the armor of a common soldier, he was killed by a stray arrow, and borne from the field mortally wounded. The armor which he wore, and the chariot in which he rode, both of them drenched with his blood, were afterwards washed in the spring of Samaria, and the dogs crowded around as they do in Eastern cities, and lapped the discolored waters. And thus the prophecy was fulfilled.

It will be observed that the reign of Ahab was almost entirely unconnected with that of his contemporary Jehoshaphat. The latter a pious, wise and calm prince, led a long and peaceful life, continuing the same work which Asa, his father, had begun, and not troubling himself with the affairs of Ahab, excepting at the time of the alliance alluded to above, when he felt the necessity of defending himself from the encroachments of the powerful and ambitious King of Syria. It was, however, more conspicuously during the reign of Ahab's son Jehoram, that the alliance between Judah and Israel ripened



VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT.

Showing the Traditional Tombs of Jehoshaphat and Zechariah, and Jewish burying-ground.

From a Photograph by Fairbairn.

into auspicious results. The Kings of Ammon and Moab, emboldened by the Syrian successes east of the Jordan, and more especially by the death of Ahab, began to revolt and to refuse to pay their annual tribute of cattle. This produced a war against them by the allied Kings of Judah and Israel, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram, which war was brought to a favorable conclusion in connection with the labors of Elisha. But all that Jehoshaphat did during his life-time is marked by wisdom, enterprise and a good share of piety. He seems to have been a better and an abler prince than even Asa his father. The attempt to revive the trade with Ophir shows that he had a part of the spirit which characterized Solomon; while there is no indication that he was heir to the more ignoble and purely sensuous traits which marked the nature of Solomon. Jehoshaphat's attempt to build a fleet at the head of the eastern arm of the Red Sea, was, however, brought to naught by a great storm which destroyed the fleet which he had built; and it does not appear the project was revived. Yet the mention of the building of these ships at Eziongeber, and the hold which Jehoshaphat held on Petra the land of Edom, and which was at once lost by his successor, shows us the power and scope of the man's ideas, and makes us regret that his history has not come down to us in more extended form than it has.

CHAPTER XXV.

ELISHA AND HIS TIMES.

Contrast Between Elisha and Elijah—Mont Blanc and Righi—Elisha is Commonplace Compared with his Predecessor—Yet a Sweet and Benignant Character—Hazael the King of Syria—The Call of Elisha—Strange Affection of Elijah for Elisha—The Going Up from Gilgal to Bethel—Elisha's Short Hair and the Ridicule it Occasioned—"Go Up Thou Bald Head" Explained—A Peaceful Career—Elisha's Great Kindnesses—The Wonders He Wrought—Elisha is the Master Even of Kings.



EXT to Elijah in interest, during the times which we are now contemplating, is Elisha. And yet he was a far different man; far more of a Christian, so to speak; far more in sympathy with what we call a modern spirit. Elijah is a grand and awful character; like Moses, he rises among the men of the Old Testament as Mont Blanc or the Jungfrau rises among the mountains of Switzerland, majestic and overpowering, while Elisha is like the sunny and tree covered Righi, whose top is bathed in sunlight, and whose sides are dotted with chalets to the very crown. Elisha is a much more commonplace character than Elijah; he is not a man who can stir our enthusiasm very much; there is not much about him that is epic, chivalrous and heroic; his life is eventful, indeed, but not in a soldierly way; and it is a sensible drop from Elijah to him, judged by any standard but that of Christianity. And yet a sweet, benignant and enjoyable character, and if we take him and hold him in a Christian light, we shall discover much in him to admire and imitate.

When Elijah was at Horeb, it was told him that he should anoint Hazael to be King of Syria in place of Benhadad, the legitimate ruler, and Jehu to be King of Israel, in place of

Jehoram, the legitimate ruler; and that he should choose Elisha to be prophet in his stead when he should be called away. Only one of these charges was fulfilled by Elijah in person; the other two were left by him to his successor. It is probable that the cruel, crafty, and ambitious spirit of Hazael, the Syrian General, was known to him even then; and that he was not unacquainted with the soldierly daring, the impetuosity, and the Cromwellian aspirations of Jehu, the Israelite captain. In the still small voice at Horeb, it was made known to him that these two men were to subvert the authority of their respective kings and reign in their stead. Going back from Mt. Sinai, one of his first acts was to summon Elisha, then a young man, living at Abel-meholah, (its site unknown,) to follow him. Elisha seems to have been a person of property; and the result of his call was such as to serve as a lesson to every man who feels himself called to follow Jesus. He took one of the twelve yoke of oxen with which he was ploughing, killed them and used the very implements with which they were laboring to make a farewell feast to his friends. The scene as it is given us in the Bible is very graphic and beautiful; Elijah in calling the young man seems to do it in the most artless and naive fashion, as though not conferring any remarkable honor; while Elisha received the summons with the most hearty faith, and the most complete giving of himself up to the work of entering into the mission of Elijah.

And yet what a wonderful contrast between the men! Elijah clad in his rough sheepskin mantle, having a leather strap around his loins, his hair long and streaming, abrupt in speech and having the manner of a wild Arab; Elisha young, dressed in the ordinary garb of an Israelite, gentle in his manners and courtly in his speech. And yet between these two there sprang up at once a relation most tender and delightful; and Elisha seems in the close of Elijah's life as devoted and loving as a wife or daughter. For Elijah, like many men of rough exterior, of curt, unpolished speech, and fiery nature,

was also very strong in his affections and loved his friends with an intensity unknown to less rugged and powerful natures; and this affection was met and responded to with entire devotion by the more cultivated and softly-spoken Elisha. Their journey from Gilgal, up in the hills north of Bethel, (not the Gilgal down by the Jordan,) to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho and from Jericho to the place of translation among the hills of Gilead, Elijah's childhood home, is beautifully told and reveals a friendship as touching and as romantic as that of David and Jonathan.

I have been struck with the prompt manner in which Elisha addressed himself to his life-work directly after his great teacher had passed out of his sight. There was no sitting down in idle and useless grief; there was the immediate addressing of himself to the work in hand. He at once enters upon his active career, and although the first scene in which he appears is one which is calculated to awaken our wonder, yet it is exceptional to the whole tenor of his life, and is immediately followed by that long list of beneficent acts which make his works if not his words immortal. As he was going up that rough mountain road, now known as the Wady Suweinit, which runs from the site of Jericho to that of Bethel, and which still maintains the same jagged and difficult character which it did when it was so often traversed by the sons of the prophets, Elisha was laughed to scorn by the children, and called down upon them the curse of the Lord. It will be remembered that Elisha was not at that time the aged venerable man whose form is given us in children's books, bowed down with infirmity, but a young and athletic man not over thirty, and with more than half a century of labors before him. His appearance was ridiculously mean and insignificant after the imposing and wild and awful Elijah, and every child saw it and felt it. That this young man, dressed in the ordinary way, and wearing his hair short (mistranslated in our Bibles baldhead) should be the successor of that man whose mantle, girdle, and long, wild locks were known throughout the country,

awakened the scorn even of the children, and they hooted at him on the very highway.

But how shall we explain the curse which Elisha called down upon them, so exceptional to his whole life? Almost everywhere else he is a bearer of blessings, of abundance, of happiness; here he brings in destruction. To the mind of some this seems unaccountable. But it is not so. Elijah corresponds well with John the Baptist, and Elisha with our Blessed Lord; yet although so many of the wonders which are told in connection with Elisha are anticipations, even in their very form, of those which Jesus wrought, yet the one was human, the other divine. In one we are to look for all perfection, in the other not. When Jesus was asked whether he would call down fire upon those who troubled him, he said, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." But in this we only see how far the Christian religion rises above the flights of human perfection. In Elisha we are not to look for perfect exemption from the infirmities of the human spirit. And when we bear in mind that he did not feel himself insulted in his own person, but as the successor of Elijah, and that the honor of his God was at stake, we may not wonder so much that he was tempted to utter words which should cause the whole population, young and old, to see that in spite of his young face and his every-day garb, he was the recognized follower of him whose countenance all had feared.

But after the outbreak of this curse on the children, the story of Elisha is most calm and peaceful, a record of good and kindly deeds. I need not narrate them all, for their story is told in the singularly picturesque and felicitous style of Scripture, and is absolutely fascinating. The story of the spring which was healed by the salt, and whose gushing waters may be seen even now in the neighborhood of the site of Jericho; the supplying of the widow's oil so that all the vessels in her house were not able to hold it, the relieving of the Shunammite woman of her barrenness, the subsequent restoration of her child to life, and later still the restoration of her

property, the taking away of the poisonous qualities which lurked in the pot at Gilgal; the enlargement of the first fruits of the man from Baal-shaalisha, so that they sufficed for a great multitude; the cleansing of Naaman, the great Syrian lord; the causing of the axe to swim, the supplying of Samaria with an abundance of flour,—all these things read very much like the life of the Saviour, and are the blessed overflow of a life which seems a kind of prelude to the Gospel.

The story of Elisha's wonders is much more fully told than is that of the kings during whose reigns he lived. He seems indeed to have been pre-eminently the great man of his time, and to have eclipsed not only the monarch of his own country, but the Kings of Judah and Syria. The whole tenor of the language which describes him indicates that before him every knee bowed. The terms applied to him indicate the most perfect deference. He moves across the page of the sacred story more than a king. He anointed kings, he gave counsel to them in time both of war and of peace; he was received by them with splendors accorded to none but princes; he dictated to them as from a place superior to them all. He is intimately connected with all the great events of his day; and it was he who anointed Hazael and (by another hand) Jehu, and so fulfilled the prediction made to Elijah at Horeb.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JEHU AND HIS REIGN.

Encroaching Power of Syria—Combination Thus Enforced Between the Kingdom of Israel and that of Judah—The Syrians Masters of Ramoth-gilead—The City Occupied Temporarily by Jehu—Marriage Alliances—Jehu Appointed King—The Effect of the Tidings on Him—Jehu Hurries to the City of Jezreel—Riding "Like Jehu"—Treachery at Court—Jezebel at the Capital—Death of the Wicked Queen—Jehu's First Acts—The Infamy of Athaliah.

DURING all Elisha's life there was a constant succession of hostilities between Syria and Israel. The former was no longer the bundle of separate nations, rude and undisciplined, which it had been in the time of David; it had grown to be a strong and united power. It had begun to encroach perceptibly on the northern and eastern boundaries of Palestine. Against this domineering empire, Israel and Judah had combined even in the time of Ahab and Jehoshaphat; and it was to the growth of Syria alone that the alliance of the two Hebrew kingdoms is to be ascribed. Had it not been for the Syrian encroachments, the kings of those two Hebrew kingdoms would have been at perpetual feuds with each other, and an alliance would have been impossible.

The Syrians had gained the important strategic point east of the Jordan, known as Ramoth-gilead, even in the time of Ahab, and it was before its walls that that King had received his death wound. Just where Ramoth-gilead was we cannot with certainty say, but it lay beyond question deep in the fastnesses of the mountains, and has with some probability been identified with es Salt. After the death of Ahab it remained in the hands of the Syrians till during the convulsion caused by

Hazael's murder of Benhadad, the Syrian army was withdrawn, and the city was occupied temporarily by Jehu, a bold Israelite general, who was known for his impetuous horsemanship, as well as for his warlike and ambitious character. Jehoram, the son of Ahab, was then King of Israel, and was lying ill of a wound which he had received under the walls of that same city of Ramoth-gilead. Ahaziah, his nephew, the King of Judah, was paying him a visit, and the two Kings were together in the summer palace at Jezreel. Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, had married Athaliah, the infamous daughter of Ahab, and thus the two families were allied, not merely by war, but by blood. It was the son of Jehoram (of Judah) and Athaliah, and the grandson therefore of Ahab, who was now visiting Jehoram (of Israel), the son of Ahab. While they were together, the army was at Ramoth under the command of Jehu. At this juncture a young man was deputed by Elisha to cross the river and anoint Jehu to be King. He did so, and the manner in which the bold soldier received the tidings was characteristic of him. The other generals do not seem to have been much surprised, and appear to have acquiesced with great alacrity in the new movement, and to have hailed their old companion as King without delay. Jehu, not willing that any tidings of the event should reach Jezreel in advance of his own arrival, gave strict orders that no one should leave the camp. Then ascending his chariot, and accompanied by his friends, he drove rapidly down the gullies to the Jordan, crossed the river, and hurried furiously on toward the gates of Jezreel, where was the wounded and convalescent Jehoram and his nephew Ahaziah the King of Judah. On the tower of Jezreel a man was stationed to look always towards the east, to give notice of any possible Syrian invasion. The watchman, looking down the pass which is between Little Hermon and the hills of Gilboa, saw the advancing troop, and reported the movement to the King below. The latter ordered a messenger to be despatched at once, who hurried down to Jehu, and asked, "Is it peace?" The reply was

characteristic, "What have I to do with peace; turn thee behind me." "And the watchman told, saying 'The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again.' Then he sent out a second on horseback, and said, 'Then saith the king, Is it peace?' Now Jehu answered, 'What have I to do with peace, turn thee behind me.'" By this time they were so near that the watchman could see the manœuvre, and could also discern that the furious driver was no other than Jehu, whose



ANCIENT CHARIOT.

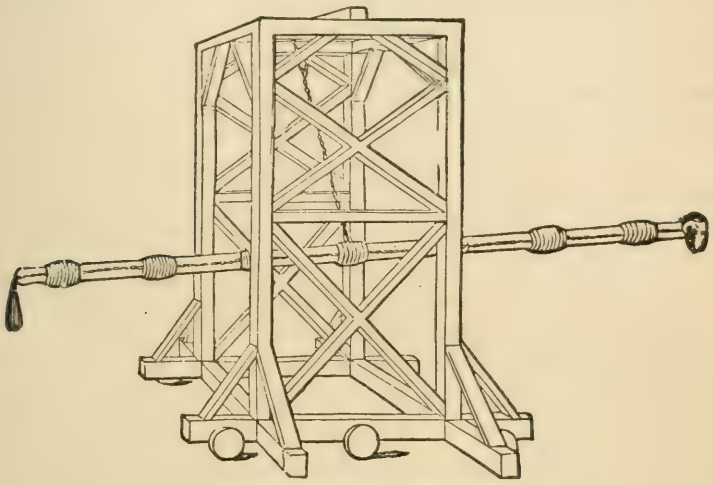
stormy, impatient and impetuous character were so well indicated by his driving. He rapidly approached. The Israelite King rose from his bed, and mounting his chariot and taking his royal nephew along with him, he hastened out to meet the dreaded soldier whose errand was so clear. "And it came to pass when Joram saw Jehu that he said, 'Is it peace, Jehu?' And he answered, 'What peace so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many!' And Joram turned his hands and fled and said to Ahaziah, 'There

is treachery, O Ahaziah.'" At that instant Jehu drew his bow with his full strength and gave Jehoram a wound which caused instant death. It so fell out, that he was at that very instant riding through the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreélite. His body was cast out into that very field which his father had gained by infamy, and so the old prediction of Elijah was fulfilled. Ahaziah fled, but was pursued and was slain at one of the passes which lead from the plain of Esdraelon up to Mount Carmel. His body was taken to Samaria and subsequently to Jerusalem, where he was buried in the sepulchre of David.

Meanwhile Jehu hastened on and entered the city. Jezebel, then advanced in years was there, and endeavoring to disguise the ravages of time, she drew a line of red about her eyes in the Oriental fashion, to give more brilliancy to the iris, and adorning her head, she looked out at a window. And not content with thus endeavoring to propitiate the bold soldier by charming him with the faded remnants of her beauty, she had recourse to one strike more. Reminding him of that former usurper Zimri, who like him, had slain the King and mounted to the throne, to be himself cast down after a mere seven days' reign, she asked, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" Testing the loyalty of her companions by a searching question, and discovering that their sympathy was with himself and not with Jezebel, he commanded them to throw her out of the window. They did so, and the King pressed into the palace and immediately sate down to eat and to drink. But a touch of compunction came over him when he remembered her royal lineage, and he gave command, "Go, see now this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a King's daughter." But the dogs, then as now the scavengers of the East, had faithfully done their work. Nothing was left of her but her skull and the bones of her hands and feet. And when he heard how completely they had done their work, he was reminded of the old prediction. And he said, "This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his ser-

vant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel; and the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel, so that they shall not say, 'This is Jezebel.'"

The reign of Jehu was characterized by the same qualities which he manifested in the steps which he took to secure the throne; the same fierce and soldierly spirit, the same reticence, the same cunning, the same energy and furious determination of purpose. His driving was a good index, so far as it went,



SUSPENDED BATTERING RAM.
Used in beating down the walls of such gates as were those of Samaria.

of his energy and swiftness of act. His first step was to destroy the entire house of Ahab, and that of Ahaziah as well, and in this infamous wickedness he nearly succeeded. Of the royal house of Israel, not a scion remained alive. In the southern kingdom, Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and widow of the King of Judah, seconded the bloody work of Jehu, and exterminated all her children, in order that she might still remain queen, leaving alive only Joash, her infant son, who was hidden by his aunt, and brought up in

great secrecy by her. The infamy of Athaliah has made her name a hissing through all successive ages, and in modern times Racine in France and Mendelssohn in Germany, the one in tragedy and the other in music, have commemorated her dreadful and most unmotherly act. Of all the heirs to both royal houses only one, the child Joash, remained alive. This allowed Athaliah to remain mistress of the southern throne, and Jehu of the northern.

Of Jehu's reign we have few incidents bequeathed to us, and nothing told with any fulness except the manner in which he destroyed all the Baal priests, and so rooted out that worship from Israel. Uniting himself with the austere Jehonadab, who was not of Hebrew, but of Arabian birth, he, with the secrecy and cunning characteristic of him, pretended to be a greater devotee at the shrine of Baal than even Ahab had been, and gathered within the temple of that god at Samaria the entire body of prominent Baal worshipers in the whole kingdom. Securing them there he descended upon them with the sword, destroyed them all, burned their temple, and thus brought an end to this idolatry in Israel. Yet in the latter part of his long reign, which extended over a space of twenty-eight years, he relaxed his excessive rigor in behalf of the Jehovah worship, and favored the rites which had already become fashionable during the reigns of Ahab and his sons. During Jehu's time the Syrian difficulties continued. That strong and aggressive empire, which had now gained undisputed possession of the stronghold east of the Jordan, now began to harrass the districts west of the river, and to carry desolation even to the very gates of Samaria.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DOWNFALL OF ISRAEL.

A Line of Wicked Kings—The Old Story of Jeroboam Oft Repeated—Jehu Hardly Better than the Rest—Jeroboam the Second—A Period of Crisis and Calamities—Trouble in Syria—Rise of Assyria—The Assyrian Kings—The First Invasion and the Taking of the People of the Northern Kingdom Captive—The Next Blow of the Assyrians—Palestine as Viewed by the Assyrians—Compared with Modern European Nations—A Kingdom Blotted Out—Alleged Modern Discoveries of the Ten Tribes—The Site of Nineveh—The Prophets of the Bible—Their Function as Preachers.



T would be of little profit that I enter into the story of the various reigns of the Israelite kings. With the partial exception of Jehu, they all followed in the footsteps of Jeroboam, and forsook the purity of the Jehovah worship, for that disguised worship of power which Jeroboam had ushered in with his own self-constructed state religion. Like the refrain of a dirge, the mournful words recur with reference to each of the Israelite kings, that "he walked in the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." The laws of God were trampled on; the Divine Being himself forgotten; the purity and excellence of Jehovah had passed out of the knowledge of men and nothing had taken their place but hero worship, self-idolatry, admiration of human will and intellectual power, and a blind adoration of the forces of nature. Even Jehu, who had made a bold stand against the falsehoods of his age, was a kind of rude Cromwell, a man with Cromwell's faults without his virtues, and failed to come up to what lay within his grasp. His overthrow of the Baal worship, which he had carried out with excessive cruelty and with fanatical austerity, was barren

in permanent results, even on Jehu himself. The dynasty which he founded was, however, the largest of all in the northern kingdom, for it lasted a hundred and three years and embraced five monarchs, descending from Jehu in regular line. They were Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II. and Zachariah. Only one of the descendants of Jehu was a man of much power; that was Jeroboam II., perhaps the greatest prince who ever sat on the throne of Israel. He reigned forty-one years, and his career was characterized by great military exploits, which although narrated very briefly in the closing verses of II. Kings, xiv., show great prowess and skill on the part of the monarch. He regained and re-established the whole eastern border of the kingdom, from the northern limit, the "Entering of Hamath" down to the Dead Sea; reconquered Damascus, and the city of Hamath, and so showed himself superior to the great Syrian empire, whose capital, Damascus, had during the reign of Hazael, dominated so imperiously over the adjoining kingdom of Israel. Yet the details of this mighty man's reign have all perished. The loss of one of the important books which would have been incorporated in our Bible, the "Chronicles of the Kings of Israel," deprives us of much which would have been most interesting, and which has perished forever!

With the reigns of the few Kings that followed, we have little to do, for they were men of no great importance, and quickly passed away. It was a period of crises and calamities, and brings back the time when Israel was a new kingdom, and one dynasty followed another in quick succession. Zachariah, the last King of the house of Jehu, reigned but six months. He was slain by Shallum, an ambitious usurper, who reigned but one month. His reign in turn was subverted by Menahem, who was followed by his son Pekaaiah, and then his dynasty came to an end. It was a period of civil war, confusion and bloodshed.

Meanwhile the foreign relations of the country underwent a complete change. At the time when the Syrian empire be-

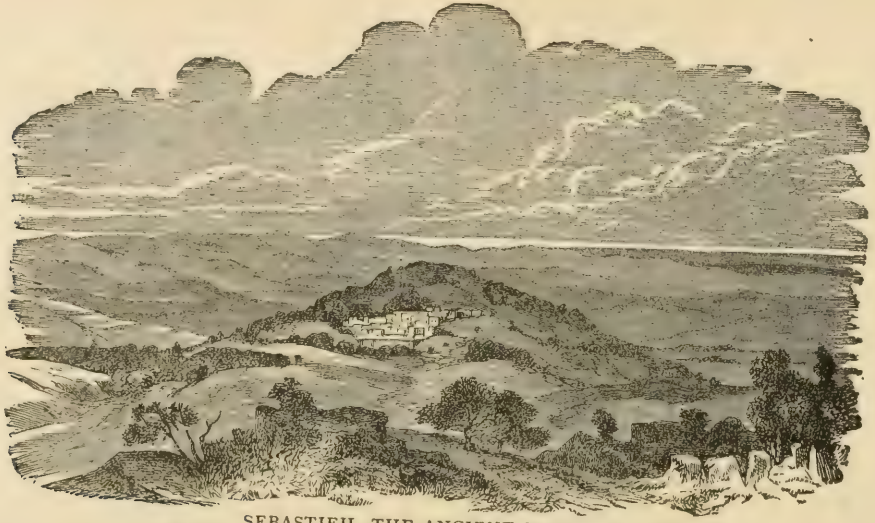


MOUNT ARARAT.

Mentioned in the Bible as the resting-place of the ark after the deluge.

gan to rise in its strength, and to work downward on the east side of the Jordan, and to make troublesome incursions into Western Palestine, Israel and Judah ceased their feuds and entered into close alliance against this formidable power on the north-east. Hence the union between the house of Jehoshaphat and that of Ahab which has been already described. But at length there began to emerge into sight another neighbor on the east, who threatened to be more troublesome than even Syria had been. This was the young but mighty empire of Assyria, under the shadow of Ararat. Its capital was Nineveh on the Tigris. That it had been powerful and had dominated over Israel at an early day is plain from the discovery of a black obelisk, which may be seen in the British Museum, on which is inscribed that Jehu, the son of Omri, paid tribute to the Assyrian King, Shalmaneser I. Even Jehu seems, therefore, to have been a kind of suzerain of Assyria. There was no invasion, however, till the time of Menawem, King of Israel, who, we find, struck at Tiphsah, on the Euphrates, probably a western frontier city of the Assyrian King, and put the people to death in the most indiscriminating and savage manner. The act seems to have been savagely resented by Pul, the Assyrian King, who descended upon Israel and carried away a large part of the people into captivity. Pul did not enter the capital, however, but spared the district immediately around Samaria, and confined his devastations to the mountain-country east of the Jordan, and to the tract north of the plain of Esdraelon. It was a great blow, however, and struck at the very life and strength of the nation. This was the first captivity of Israel.

The next and more decisive blow was struck during the reign of Hoshea. The immediate occasion was the discovery by the Assyrians of an alliance between the Israelite King and the monarch of Egypt. And this brings into view the practical value of Palestine and the relation which it now bore to the world. To us it is an interesting country, and its history an interesting history, because it is so immediately con-



SEBASTIEH—THE ANCIENT SAMARIA.
One of the most commanding sites in Palestine.
From a Sketch by William Tipping, Esq.

nected with our own Christian faith; and in comparison with its records, those which relate to the other great nations of the world fade into insignificance. Yet the men of that time saw nothing of this. To them there were but two great empires in the world, that of Egypt, which had thus far reigned without a rival, and the new, ambitious and rapidly rising empire of Assyria, with Nineveh with its 600,000 people, its lordly capital. While Egypt had no rival, she could well afford to let Palestine alone; it did not trouble her, it was a little secluded mountain block lying apart by itself, and was an entirely innocent and unoffending thing. But when there began to spring up on the Tigris, another great world power, then this mountain block which rose between the Tigris and Euphrates plain and the Nile plain, began to assume great importance; and it was a question of time which should possess it first. It was like Saxony during the late German war; and as both Prussia and Austria longed for some pretext which would allow them to seize upon that beautiful hill-country which lay between the plains of Prussia and those of Bohemia, so did Assyria and Egypt both covet the natural outpost and fortress of Palestine. No sooner had it been reported in Nineveh, therefore, that Hoshea, the Israelite King, had begun to intrigue with So, the Egyptian King, when Shalmaneser II., the monarch of Assyria, came down upon the land with his legions, besieged Samaria for three long years, took it at last, inflicted horrible atrocities upon the people, led them away into bondage, planting them in his own cities on the tributaries of the Euphrates, and peopled Samaria with colonists of his own. This was the second captivity, and with it came the blotting out of that ill-fated kingdom from the face of the earth. I do not suppose that all the people were carried away; but unquestionably all persons of any influence met this unhappy fate, and once established in the Assyrian territory, they lost all their national individuality, and were sooner or later merged in the foreign population with which they lived. They differed from the Jews of the present day

in the loose hold which they had on their old Jehovah worship. Unlike the people of the southern kingdom who had never been brought into dangerous and alluring contact with neighboring tribes, the people of the northern kingdom had from time immemorial been under the fascinating influence of the Phœnician rites, as well as those of Syria. There was, therefore, very little fixed religious principle in the northern kingdom, and when the Ten Tribes were carried away, what there was, disappeared. I am extremely incredulous respecting the stories which have been current of late years, touching discoveries of those lost Ten Tribes. There is no question that the people who were carried into captivity were as certainly merged in the Assyrian population, as it is unquestionable that the numerous foreigners who are landing yearly on our shores will, ere long, be an unrecognizable part of our own population.

"Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
They are gone, and forever."

The discovery in our own time of the site of Ancient Nineveh, at Mosul on the Tigris, confirms to the full, all that the Scriptures tell us of the greatness and magnificence of that city in its imperial days. Even the story of Jonah entering it a three days' journey does not seem incredible, when we remember that each house was a garden house, and had its park around it, like the suburbs of Boston and Geneva. There seems to have been a population of about 600,000 at that time, and traces of the city are found for many miles. The limits of this work will not allow me to enter upon any descriptions of the wonderful discoveries which have been made by Botta and by Layard; their works can be found in all good libraries, and the theme is one of such fascinating interest and of such freshness, that almost all intelligent people have given it more or less attention. It is by no means the least recompense which one has for crossing the Atlantic, that in the British

Museum are preserved the winged lions and bulls, the huge reliefs, the great obelisks, and shafts, and pillars which have been disinterred at Mosul, and which bring back to us with an unfading charm, the features and names of the men who were the contemporaries of the Israelite kings.

While the authors of the historical books of Scripture have preserved for us what may be called an outside view of the times of the kings, of the wars which they carried on, the cities they built, the great achievements which they effected, and the idolatries which they introduced, another class of writers have preserved for us an inside view of those times. These were the prophets; and if we will turn to their pages we shall find that they give in strong and glowing language, a most vivid picture of their age. The arrangement of the books of the Bible is one which only perplexes the mind, and no one would conjecture that Jonah, whose prophecy is placed after Ezekiel and Daniel, was a contemporary of Elisha and lived during the reign of Jehu. The prophets were the real preachers of their age. In a time of great sin they rose up and protested with the greatest faithfulness and zeal against the idolatries and the crimes of their time. All those dark transgressions which disfigure our modern civilization, drunkenness, licentiousness, fraud and bribery, were prevalent then; and the prophets were the men whose pure spirits made them stand up in the courts of kings and testify to the rule of God and his judgments upon all who break his law. It may be said with especial emphasis, that the prophets were "political preachers;" for a large share of the sins of the age were the sins of rulers against the ruled; and no preacher could then be faithful to his trust who did not stand up and testify in the presence of all that line of wicked and idolatrous princes, that the wrath of God rested upon them and upon all the other great nations if they forsook him and did evil. We are accustomed to look at the prophets as simply seers; to think that their great mission was to foretell coming events. I do not deny that they saw the *results* that sin must produce; that they de-

tected clearly the certain doom which must come to the great and wicked nations of the earth; but this was but secondary and not primary; it was not the great work to which they were called. Above everything else was this, that they were preachers; and any one who will read the pages of Micah and Hosea, two of the most plain spoken of them all, will see that while they *predicted* God's doom on sin, and were always looking forward for a Saviour to arise, who should bring Israel out of her humiliation and Judah out of her sin, their message was in the same key with that of John the Baptist, a call to repentance, a proclamation of God's mercy to the penitent, and of his wrath upon the guilty. The prophets who lived during the declining days of the northern kingdom, were Jonah, Joel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Nahum and Isaiah. The career of the latter outlasted the continuance of Israel, and is connected specifically with the reign of Hezekiah of Judah. I trust that ere long we shall have in general circulation an edition of the Bible which shall contain the text of the authorized version, but wrought into a strictly chronological form, so that our readers can have the books of prophecy brought in at just the epoch where they can be read to advantage, and the whole Bible made a unit, from the first chapter to the last.

The duration of the kingdom of Israel, from its establishment by Jeroboam down to its being blotted from the list of nations, was two hundred and fifty-five years.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE ANNALS OF JUDAH—THE GOOD KING HEZEKIAH.

The Annals of Judah not so Remarkable for Wicked Kings as those of Israel—Instances of Piety on the Throne—Hezekiah the Most Memorable of them all—His Life Narrated in Three Different Parts of the Bible—The Book of Isaiah—The Former Assyrian Invasions—The One which Now Occurred—Sennacherib, His Character—The Memorial of Him at Dog River, Near Beyrout—Other Memorials There—The Assyrian Army—What was Expected—Isaiah's Description of the Approach—Topographical Worth of His Description—The Assyrians did not Advance on these Lines, however—The Siege of Lachish—Its Ruins—The Insulting Message of the Assyrian King to Hezekiah—Not Difficult to Take Jerusalem—No Words of Submission, however—The Plague in the Night—Byron's Lines—The Danger Passed—A Trace of this Fragment of History Found in Herodotus.



HE annals of Judah are not so remarkable for wicked kings as are those of Israel. From first to last in the northern kingdom is not one royal name which stands out in any beautiful and attractive light; while in the southern kingdom there are several. Not to dwell with emphasis on Asa, whose conduct may have been dictated by policy, it is enough to point at the names of Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah and Josiah, as instances of piety on the throne, such as can hardly be surpassed in the annals of the modern kingdoms of Europe. Still almost no one of them was perfect. There ever comes around the sad refrain, "Nevertheless the high places were not taken away;" and although this was thoroughly done in the reign of Hezekiah, yet even in the reigns of David and Solomon we have clear indications of this idolatrous tendency to connect the worship of God with the tops of hills, and with the groves usually found

there. As the rule, the kings of Judah were not only more religious, but more able, than those of Israel. We see repeated instances among them of men of great intelligence and grasp; signal among them are Uzziah, Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah. They labored for the advancement of all the interests of their people; they developed agriculture; they built cities; they strengthened Jerusalem; they purified the natural worship and kept the temple in repair; they established their borders in security, and were wise and efficient kings. Greatest of them all was Hezekiah, and second to him, I think, was Uzziah. It would be vain that I should endeavor to draw the portraits, or depict the actions of all these various kings; the story of their careers is told with great felicity in the Bible itself, and those who wish to study their exploits in detail, will find the Bible the best hand-book. But on the reign of Hezekiah I must linger a little; for not only was his career extremely conspicuous, so that it was the deliberate judgment of his chronicler that there was no king equal to him, among those who went before him, nor in those who followed after him, but his reign was characterized by an invasion which has left its mark on the annals of the world.

It is a noteworthy fact that the story of Hezekiah's life is told in three different parts of the Bible, first in II. Kings, then with more details in II. Chronicles, and finally, it is interjected into the heart of the prophecy of Isaiah. That vivid, beautiful, and simple fragment of prose in the midst of the florid and fervid utterances of the book known as Isaiah, does not jar upon the ear, but it is in the strongest contrast with what goes before. Strictly speaking that book seems to be not one but two; the first thirty-nine chapters being written during the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, and the last twenty-six by some unknown writer, who wrote apparently during the captivity. In a poetical light, however, the part by the "Great Unnamed" as Ewald calls him, appears to be as rich and beautiful as that which is from the hand of Isaiah himself; and as some of the Psalms not written by David, but

by unknown Hebrew poets, are as poetical as those which came from his royal hand, so is it with the mysterious author of the closing chapters of the book of Isaiah. But looking at the earlier part of that book, the first thirty-nine chapters, it may be noticed in passing that the chief reference is to the reign of Hezekiah. In the account given in II. Kings and in II. Chronicles, we have a very vivid, yet external picture of the events of that reign, but from the earlier chapters of Isaiah, we have an inside view; we see the gradual approach of the great event of the reign, the invasion of Sennacherib, and hear the waves of that vast Assyrian flood, beating on the coast of Palestine, at first faint and far, then ever more and more resounding, till at last they break on the very walls of Jerusalem.

We have already pictured other Assyrian invasions, and seen the forces of Pul and Tiglath-pileser bear away the inhabitants of the northern kingdom and blot that people from the list of nations; but the later invasion was of more formidable character yet. Its object was, however, not the taking of Palestine, but a direct attack on Egypt. The taking of Jerusalem and the southern kingdom was purely incidental, so far as the purposes of Sennacherib, the Assyrian King, was concerned. To the Jews of course their own point of view was the one of supreme importance; but to the world at large, their concerns were of but little account compared with the tremendous contest then imminent between Assyria and Egypt.

Sennacherib, the King of Nineveh at the time of Hezekiah and Isaiah, is one of the great names of history. At the time of his invasion of Palestine, he left a memorial which is not unworthily placed, and which commemorates him as one of the greatest of the Assyrian Kings. The remains which have been discovered in the Kouyunjik corner of the ruins of Nineveh, testify to his greatness, and there is proof enough that so far as splendor, magnitude and luxury are concerned, his capital surpassed some of the great cities of modern times. The excavations which have been made by Layard in the



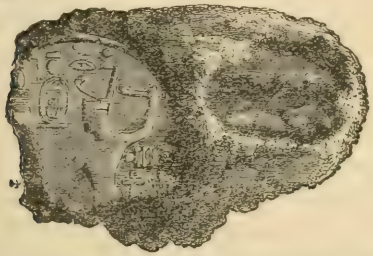
SACRED SYMBOLIC TREE OF THE ASSYRIANS. FROM LORD ABERDEEN'S BLACK STONE.

(Fergusson's *Nineveh and Persepolis*, p. 298.)



ANCIENT LAMPS IN BRITISH MUSEUM.

1, Bronze from N. W. palace, *Nimroud*. 2, Bronze from *Kouyunjik* 3, 4, Terra Cotta from *Warka*. 5, Terra Cotta from *Kouyunjik*.



IMPRESSIONS OF THE SIGNETS OF ANCIENT KINGS.

(Original Size.)



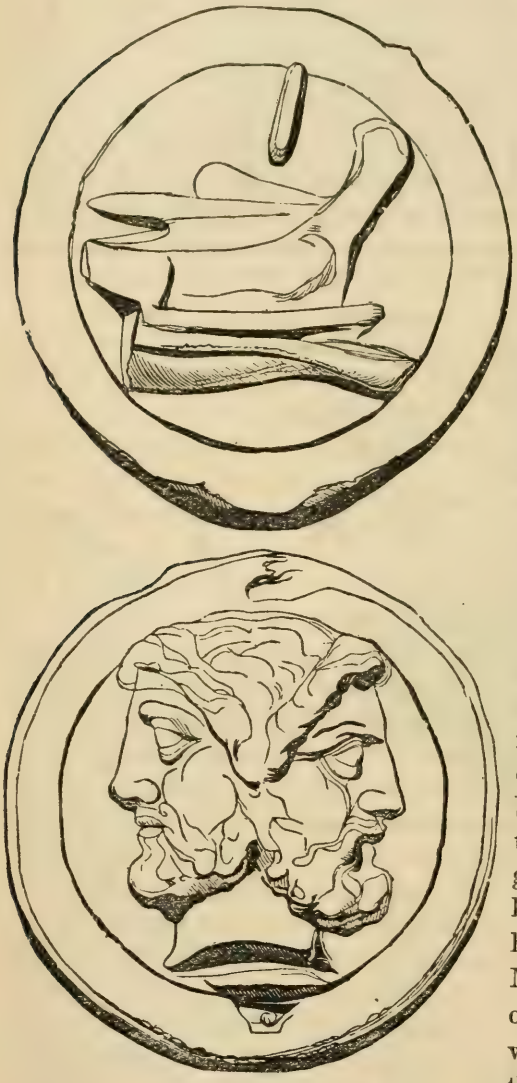
ASSYRIAN KNIVES.

From originals in the British Museum.



SENNACHERIB ON HIS THRONE.

ruins opposite Mosul, on the Tigris, are full of interest, and confirm all that we might infer from the allusions of the Scriptures to Sennacherib. But most interesting of all the memorials of him, is the one from a little north of the city of Beyrout, near the mouth of the Dog River. On the escarped walls which shut in that little stream, may be seen four tablets which represent entirely different phases of the world's history, commemorate the lives of men of marked diversity of characters, and bring together the two ends of the great continuous line of history in the happiest manner. Most interesting of them all is one which is about three thousand five hundred years old, on which the mighty Sesostris of Egypt, Rameses the

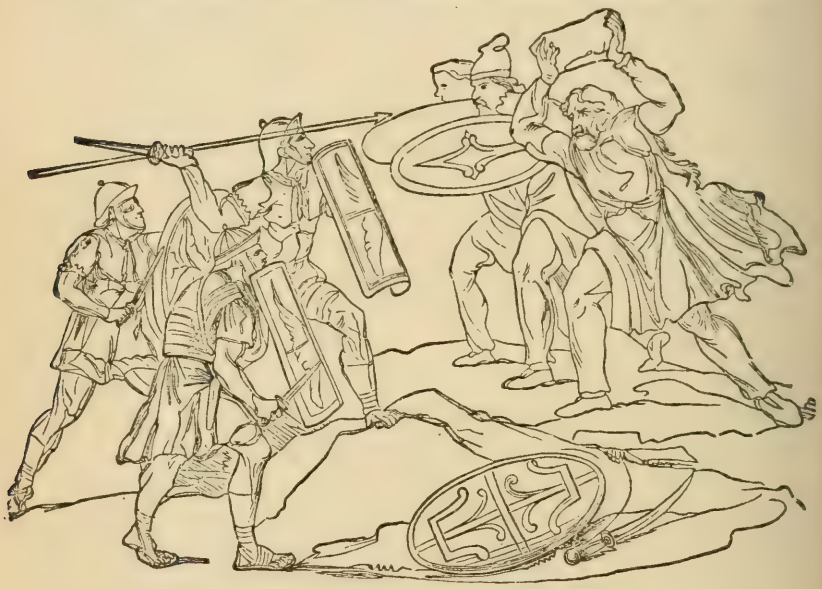


ROMAN AS.

Great, has recorded his name and his exploits, in Egyptian hieroglyphics, as he went out to the conquest of the world, *his* world. Then comes another tablet, one thousand years younger, on which the haughty Sennacherib engraved in the wedge-shaped letters of Assyria, the story of his invasion. Then comes another, still a thousand years younger, on which the Roman Emperor Antoninus has recorded in Latin the story of his exploits; and then with a leap of fifteen hundred years more, we have the name of Napoleon III., Emperor of France, and the brief history, told in the language of Paris, of the bloodless invasion of Syria in 1860. Close by these tablets runs the narrow road, between the base of the Lebanon mountains and the sea, over which millions of pilgrims, warriors, and adventurers have passed, from the morning of history down to the present time.

After passing this point, the Assyrian army, which was unquestionably one of those enormous aggregations of men such as we associate with the invasion of Greece by Xerxes, poured down the land, not taking the mountain road, but following as far as possible by the way of the plain of Sharon. They were expected, as appears by the closing verses of Isaiah x., by another route, namely by the regular road from Shechem to Jerusalem. Hezekiah and his counselors knew perfectly well that it would be impossible for Sennacherib to pass down into Egypt and leave Jerusalem behind them untaken; but it was expected that the Assyrians would not go down into the lowland of Philistia and commence hostilities there till they should have reduced Jerusalem. In those verses at the close of Isaiah x., we see how the impassioned mind of Isaiah reckoned on their advance, and all those names indicate as on a map, the advance of the Assyrian army, taking city after city, while the people flee in their despair and leave all desolate behind them. "He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages; they are gone over the passage; they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Lift up thy voice, O

daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmonah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his head against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem." I can hardly do better than to transcribe the language of Ritter in relation to the territory here alluded to: "Directly north of the city, and at a distance of twenty-five minutes, is the highland known



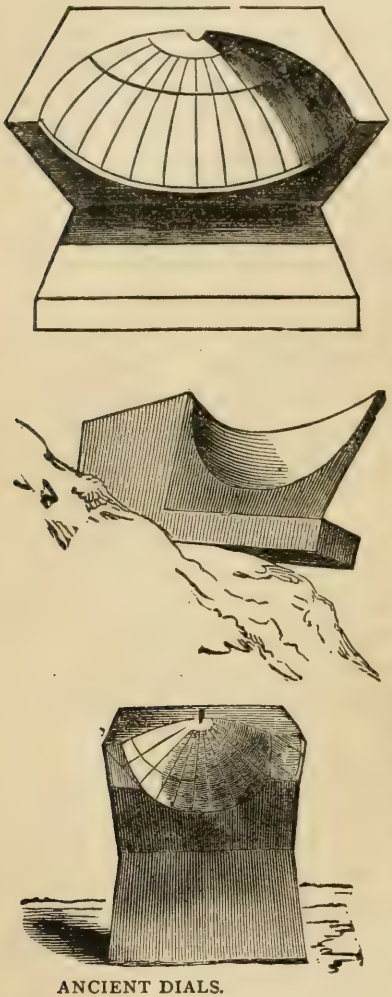
ROMAN AND BARBARIAN COMBAT.

as Scopus, whence is gained, even now, an imposing view of Jerusalem, with its towers and minarets. Only a quarter of an hour towards the north-east from this point, may be seen in the valley the small and little-known village of el-Gawiyeh; north-west, in the distance, and east of the road to Nablus, er-Ram (the ancient Ramah) may be descried. Going northward it is necessary to cross Wadi Sueleim before reaching the highland on which lies the village of Anrata, at a distance of an hour and a quarter from Jerusalem.

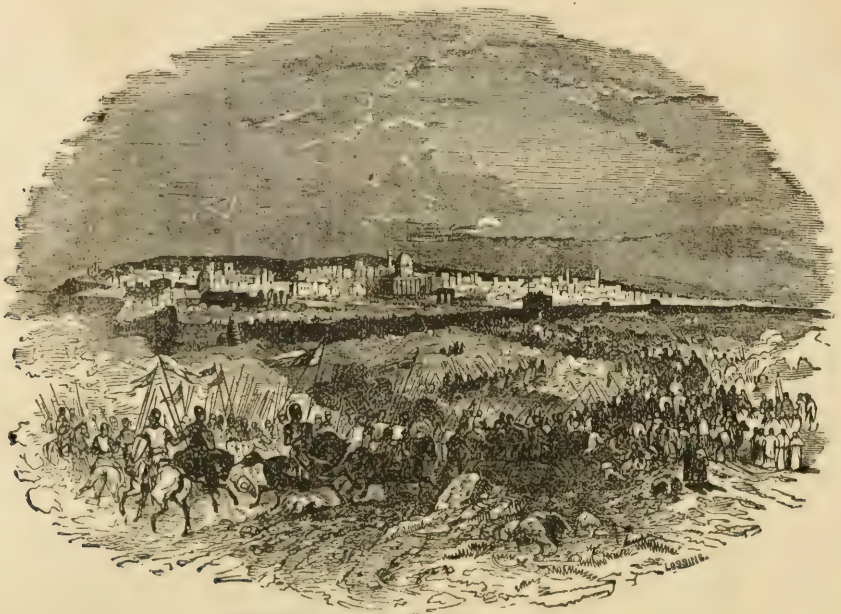
The time for the destruction of Jerusalem had not fully come when Isaiah was able to announce that the Assyrian army, which was approaching from the north, should be driven from their camp by the hand of pestilence. The approach of the army is announced, though not in strategical language, by the prophet; and his words, though uttered in the manner of a seer, have a great deal of topographical value, and aid much in giving a clear view of the district north of Jerusalem, where the Assyrians had pitched their camp; (Is. x. 28–23). Of the places mentioned by him, Anata, the ancient Anathoth, displays in the wall and some great hewn stones the traces of its former importance; even a few pillars were seen by Robinson among the ruins. The present village shows but a few huts, and shelters scarcely a hundred inhabitants. The Ramah, alluded to by Isaiah as crying out in terror, lies on a cone-shaped hill towards the north-north-west, where the village er-Ram is now found; Gibeah of Saul, (now Tell el Ful), with its high heaps of stones, is more to the south, while Geba, (the modern Jeba), lies directly northward, where the Assyrian army encamped. The places mentioned by the names of Madmenah, Gebim and Nob, lay south of Anathoth, and therefore in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem; the site of Nob is indicated with great exactness by the expression, "He shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem."

But the Assyrian host did not advance at all by that line, but came down by the line of plains between the hill-country and the Mediterranean. And the first strong point which Sennacherib attacked was not Jerusalem, but Lachish, a city lying in the middle of Philistia, on a low hill, still bearing the huts of the modern village of Lakis. It was then one of the strongest places in all Palestine; and in the bas-reliefs which have been discovered by Layard in the ruins of Nineveh, commemorating the memorable siege of Lachish, it can be clearly seen that the city was defended with very great skill. The whole Assyrian army, numbering how many thousands we

know not, planted itself before the walls of Lachish, and while in position there, the king sent up an embassy with a most imperious and insulting message to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. The story of its reception is told in Kings, in Chronicles, and in Isaiah, xxxvi. and xxxvii., with great felicity. Words can not convey more beautifully than do those of the Bible, the manner in which the King, his chaplain Isaiah, and his counselors, received the two messages which were successively sent by the Assyrian King and the truly religious manner in which the whole matter was laid before the Lord. Throughout the whole, both king and prophet appear in a light as winning to us as it was unquestionably acceptable to the God whom they served. The situation was one of extreme peril. Jerusalem was really weak in its defences, and from some incidental passages in the early chapters of Isaiah, we see that there were clefts in the walls through which it would have been no very difficult thing for an assailing army to force its way. Down in Lachish it was well known that measures of extreme severity had been dealt out to the captives who had fallen



ANCIENT DIALS.



ARMIES APPROACHING JERUSALEM.

into the hands of the Assyrian King; and in the tablets which even now remain, it can be seen that they were flayed alive in the presence of the haughty and cruel monarch. The message which the Rabshekah bore was indicative of no clement spirit on the part of his master should the city refuse to surrender, and defy the Assyrian army. Yet strong in his confidence in the LORD GOD, Hezekiah sent back no word of submission or humiliation. He trusted in his God, and the end showed that he was wise in this. While the great foreign army was preparing itself for an assault on Jerusalem, one of those sudden and devastating plagues which were and are the scourge of the East, broke out in the Assyrian camp, and nearly two hundred thousand men became its speedy victims. It shattered the whole campaign; caused the project of invading Egypt and of attacking Jerusalem to be precipitately abandoned; compelled Sennacherib to withdraw in haste to his own country, and left good King Hezekiah and his wise friend and counselor, Isaiah, master of the situation. The story of that Assyrian invasion has been beautifully told by the poet Byron, whose verses, though familiar, I will venture to quote:

"The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars in the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

"Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen,
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown.

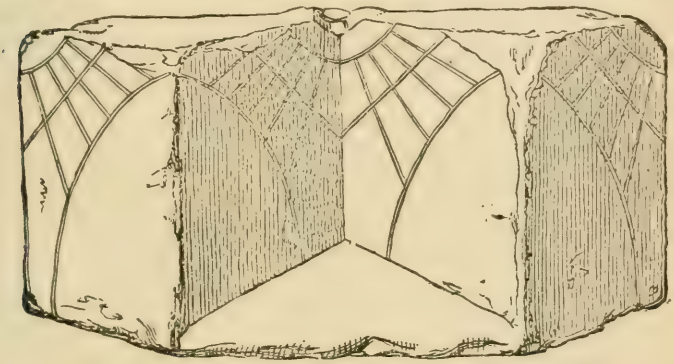
"For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved and forever grew still!

"And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
But cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

"And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

"And the widows of Ashur were loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temples of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile unsmote by the sword,
Hath perished like snow in the glance of the Lord."

And thus passed away that great danger; and the moral of that wonderful event has passed into the history of the world. The destruction of the Assyrian army filled the outlying nations with wonder, and we are told that they sent their Kings



THE DIAL OF AHAZ.

with presents to Hezekiah, to be offered to his God. The story of the great overthrow reached Egypt, of course, and we find a trace of it in the tradition which Herodotus records, that the invading army of Sennacherib was attacked by an army of mice which consumed them utterly. That this is not correct, is reasonable to infer; but that the Egyptian tradition is a valuable voucher for the general correctness of it, is clear.

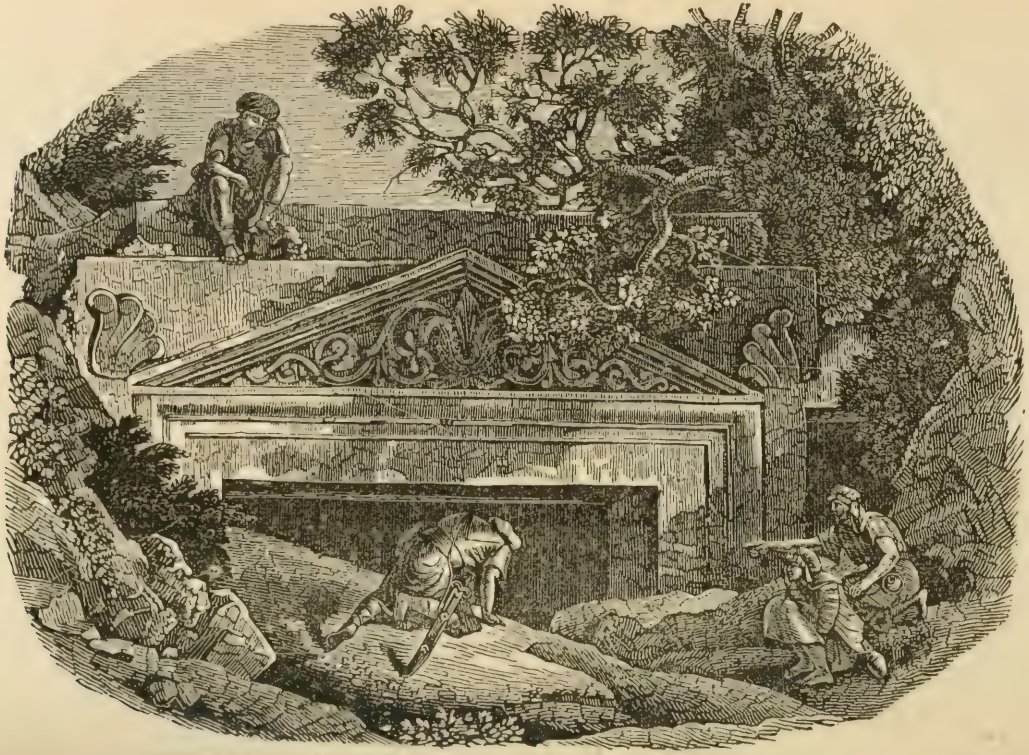
I will not enter into the other events of Hezekiah's reign, his sickness and recovery, and the wonderful sign on the dial of Ahaz, interesting though they are. When at last he died, he was buried with the greatest honors, and his name stands the highest of all the Kings of Judah, save David alone.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE CAPTIVITY—NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Prevalence in Corruption in Jerusalem and Judah—Josiah Raised Up to Stem it—Brief Reigns—Kings Carried into Captivity at Babylon—Zedekiah has his Eyes Put Out—Battle of Megiddo—Rivalry of Babylon and Egypt—The Prophecy of Jeremiah—Discovery of the Bible—The Old Faith a Dead Thing—The Approach of the Final Siege of Jerusalem—The Invasion of Nebuchadnezzar—The Character of this Monarch—Daniel—The Ruins of Babylon—Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity.

THE prevailing corruption of morals in Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah, was so great that the protest of even such a King as Hezekiah availed but little against it. The fate of the land was evidently sealed; and although there was raised up yet one more good and great King, the pious Josiah, to attempt a protest against the idolatries and impieties of his land; still not even all the grand attempts of this excellent and devoted prince, were able to make headway against the strong stream of national corruption. After Hezekiah there were seven reigns before the captivity, one of them, and the most infamous of them all, that of Manasseh, being long, in fact the longest of all the kings of his nation (fifty-five years), while the others were generally brief and inglorious, those of Jehoahaz and Jehoiachim being but three months each in duration. There is no need to enter into the details of these men's administrations; all of them except Josiah "did evil in the sight of the Lord;" nearly all of them came into conflict with the powers on the Tigris and Euphrates; Manasseh was carried into captivity into Babylon; Jehoiakim was killed by the King of Babylon; Jehoiachin was carried into captivity by the same



TOMBS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH, IN THE VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT. *Cassas.*

monarch; and Zedekiah was not only carried away in like manner, but his eyes were put out, and his sons were put to death with a refinement of oriental cruelty. Josiah alone came to his end in a conflict with Egypt, the land to whose alliance and protection the Hebrews felt themselves constantly driven, and with which they constantly intrigued. During a great campaign between the King of Egypt, Pharaoh-nechez and the King of Assyria, Josiah joined the latter against the



ANCIENT PERSIAN SPEARS AND SHIELDS.

former; took the field in person; attacked the Egyptian army just after it had passed over the plains of Philistia and Sharon, and was winding over the Carmel ridge and entering the plain of Esdraelon at Megiddo. Here the Hebrew King received a mortal wound, and was carried back to Jerusalem for interment.

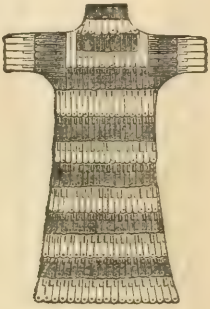
During all these closing years we discover afresh what we have already noticed, that Palestine was not held in high regard by the Kings of Assyria, Babylon and Egypt, so much



ANCIENT HEAVY ARMED WARRIOR.
From Hope's Costume of the Ancients.



ROMAN SLINGER.
From Column of Antonius.



ANCIENT CUIRASS.

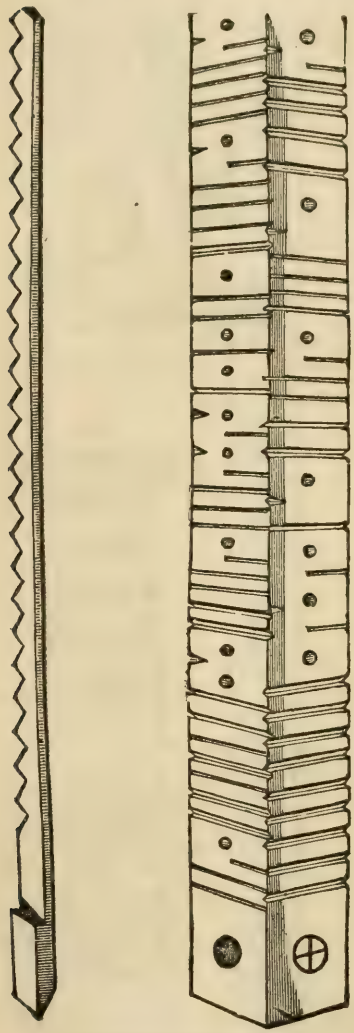


PERSIAN SWORD OR ACINACES.



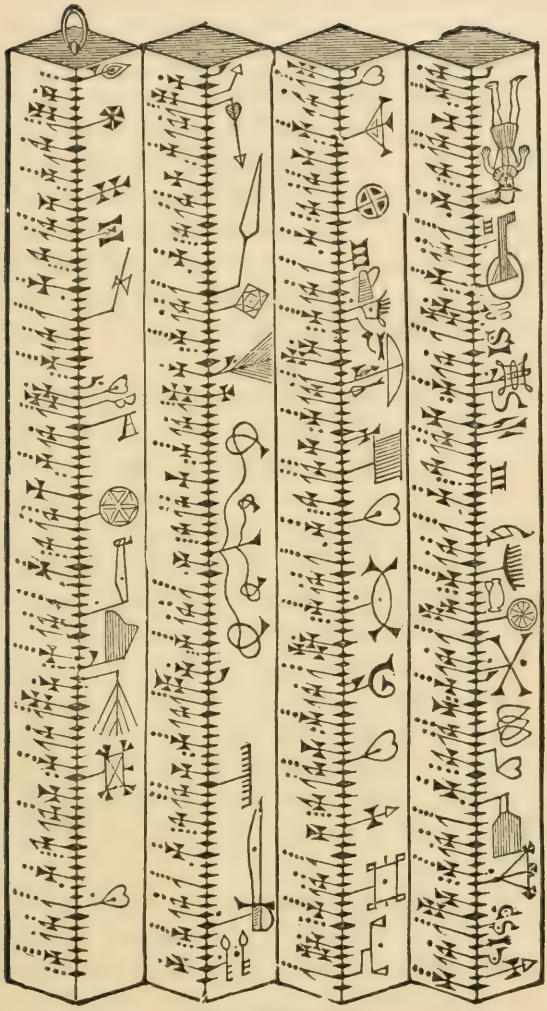
ANCIENT CUIRASS.
(From Wilkinson.)

for what it was in itself, as for what it was as a kind of natural outlying fortress. It was seen that the possession of that mountain wall, lying between the plains of Mesopotamia and the valley of the Nile, was the most secure defence of the empire which might hold it; and hence that long protracted contest for its possession, which was at last crowned by the decisive act of Nebuchadnezzar, who not only destroyed the city, took away all the treasures of the temple, burned the temple, but carried away into his own territory the entire population, with the exception of the commonest agricultural laborers, and a little garrison of Jews under a governor of his own appointing. The prophecy of Jeremiah contains the most pathetic and interesting account that has come down to us, of the breaking up of the nation; and his book of Lamentations has perpetuated the sad and wailing cry of that stern and true patriot, after he saw the city sitting in her widowhood, desolate and ruined.



ANCIENT RECORDS.

As a proof of the thoroughly demoralized condition of the nation in those last days, may be cited the slight effect of a startling discovery made in Josiah's time. While workmen were making thorough re-



CLOG ALMANAC.

"The sticks whereon thou writest."

pairs in the temple at the King's command, in their rummagings they came across a roll which seemed of consequence enough to show to the proper authorities. It was at once carried to the King by the high priest and the scribe, and proved to be no less valuable a document than the old LAW: the Bible; the only Bible that had thus far been formed, the Mosaic Books. How profound was the sensation that followed this discovery may be seen from the gesture and action of the King, who in his fear and amazement, rent his clothes. How long the Bible had been thus hidden we have no means of ascertaining; there is no datum which suggests even an inference as to the time when it passed out of the knowledge of men.

But the nation was thoroughly degenerate. The old faith had died out. The race of prophets was almost extinct; the persecutions of Manasseh had removed almost all the men who had been faithful to the ancient Jehovah; and the church had nearly died out. In such a time as this, even the most thorough purification was necessarily a superficial one; and nothing substantial came of it. Had the people remained true to their own selves and to the ideas which they had in trust, they might have held their own; nay more than that, they might have held the balance of power between Babylonia and Egypt; and in the end dictated, substantially, to both of those great nations. As it was they succumbed and went down; and although their name did not perish from the earth, they from this time became a dependent and subjugated people.

The story of the successive approaches of the final siege of Jerusalem is briefly sketched in II. Kings and in II. Chronicles, but is more fully told in Jeremiah. For just as the burden of Isaiah is the approaching invasion of Sennacherib and his army, so is the burden of Jeremiah the approaching invasion of Nebuchadnezzar. Step by step the great King of Babylon came near, substantially taking the city over again, but never till the close of the great drama, actually breaking down its



ANCIENT PERSIAN COMBAT.

gates and walls, burning its temple and its palaces, and carrying away all its precious things. How dreadful was the last siege of eighteen months' duration, can be easily gathered from the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Hardly has the history of the world witnessed one more fearful; one which weighed more cruelly upon the princes and the people. Suffering from hunger assumed its usual horrible aspect during a siege.



STREET IN JERUSALEM.

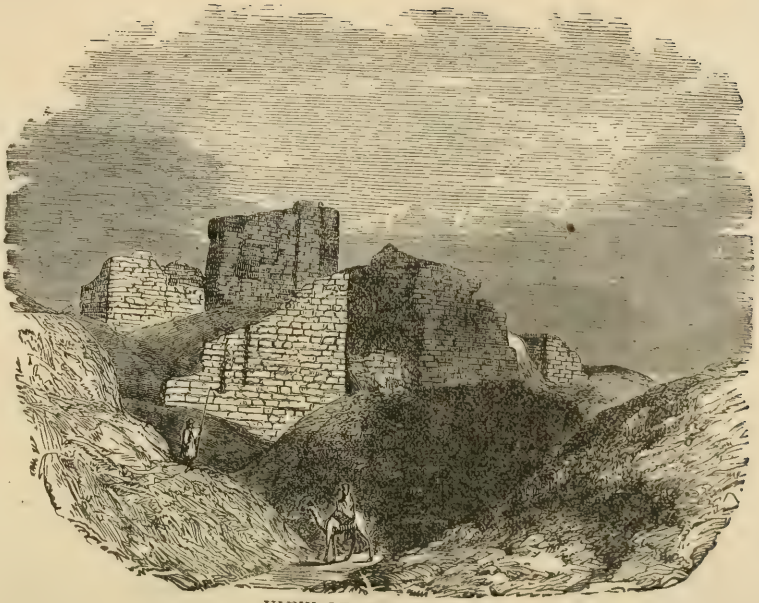
children were cooked and eaten for food; great princes and leading families were reduced to the direst straits; and women who had never known anything of want or suffering, now felt its presence in the most dreadful forms. The captivity was prefaced by events which must have burned themselves into the national heart; it was the culminating point of an awful list of woes and perils.

Of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, who brought these evils upon the Jews we have full accounts brought down to us. We have in the first place the allusions to him in Kings and in Chronicles; we have next, the full details recorded in Jeremiah, and better still, we have the full and explicit picture given us in the first four chapters of Daniel. No one could have been better circumstanced than was Daniel to judge the character of this great, superstitious and politic prince; for he was not only one of the Jews who were carried into cap-



ANCIENT ARMOR—PERSIAN HORSEMAN.

tivity, but while in Babylon he was raised to a high place of trust in the king's household, in consequence of his rare skill in the much cultivated art of divination. From Daniel we learn, that though Nebuchadnezzar was not deficient in the arts of war, he was much more celebrated for his devotion to the interests of peace. The question which he is represented by Daniel as putting to himself, "Is not this great Babylon which I have builded," is made more intelligible to us by the numerous and striking remains which have come down to our



VIEW OF THE KASR.
The site of the Great Palace of Nebuchadnezzar.

time from Nebuchadnezzar's hand. The ruins of Babylon have been recently discovered near the confluence of the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers; and on four-fifths of the bricks which have been found in the place where they were originally laid, is found stamped the name of Nebuchadnezzar. He made that city the most sumptuous capital of his time. Doubtless it was as splendid a city as now exists even in this modern world. His parks, his palaces, his summer houses, his stately warehouses, his long and imposing lines of streets would eclipse even our London, Paris and New York. Nor were his exploits confined to Babylon alone. Nearly a hundred sites of cities in Babylonia have been examined by Sir Henry Rawlinson, and in them all the name of Nebuchadnezzar has been found on the larger share of bricks lying in their original position. He is a man evidently worthy of all his fame. During the later years of his reign there came over him a kind of insanity not unknown to physicians ancient and modern, which made him suppose himself a beast, and impelled him to take the posture of an ox and to suppose that he must live on the grass of the field. He eventually recovered from his madness and remained till his death in the complete possession of all his faculties.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONDITION OF THE JEWS DURING THE CAPTIVITY.

The Books of Daniel, Ezekiel and Esther—The Grandeur of the Babylonian Monarch—Glimpses of the Jewish People—Their Slavery—The Book of Esther in Special—A Romantic History—Why that Book is Found in the Bible—Objections Considered—Xerxes the Great—Esther Herself—The Great Providence Displayed in the Whole History—Salvation of the Jewish Nation—The Feast of Purim Still Kept by the Jews—Side Lights Thrown Upon the Jewish History—Their Prosperity in Babylon—Reluctant to Return—Cyrus—His Shrewdness in Allowing the Jews to Go Back.

 E get the most of the knowledge which we have of the condition of the Jews during the time of their seventy years captivity, from the books of Daniel, Ezekiel and Esther. The opening pages of Daniel present us with a vivid picture of the grandeur and material magnificence of the Babylonian monarchs, and in Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar we have masterly types of the luxury, vanity, profligacy and tyranny of oriental monarchs. Little glimpses are given us of the Jewish people; we see that they were much broken up and scattered throughout the whole of the empire; that they throve in trade, and acquired a certain degree of prosperity and contentedness; that some of them, such as Daniel and Nehemiah rose to exalted stations; and that the people differed, by common consent, from the people who held them captive. Their estate of slavery was much lighter than it had been in Egypt a thousand years before, but it was a state of slavery, nevertheless. In the book of Esther we have one of the most graphic and glowing pictures which are to be found in the gallery of history. If it were not in the Bible, it would be prized by all scholars as one of the finest and most

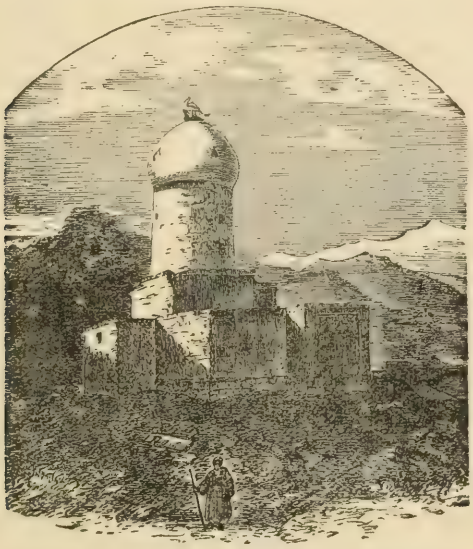


ANCIENT ENTERTAINMENTS, SHOWING THE FORM OF THE CHAIRS.

romantic things to be found in the world. Were it to turn up now in the East, its discovery would be hailed as one of the greatest of our time. It reads like a novel, for its facts and the manner in which they dovetail together, can hardly be paralleled by the incidents of any modern fiction. All children are charmed with Esther; and so too are all adults who read it, for it is a wonderful book. Had we nothing more than it and the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm we should not lack a faithful portraiture of the condition of the Jews during their long captivity. The book of Esther chimes in with the plaintive strain, "By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept;" and although the Hebrew maiden attained the high place which her grace and beauty won for her, yet even that distinguished honor was beset with constant clouds and perils.

Many persons have wondered why the Book of Esther should be found in the Bible; and the fact that it does not contain the name of God has often been urged as a triumphant proof that it cannot be considered a sacred book. And looked at in a superficial manner, there does seem to be weight in the objection, but viewed more carefully the book is seen to fill a really important place. For although it is a romantic story of private life, and details the checkered fortunes, not alone of Xerxes the Great (Ahashuerus) and one of his chief princes, Haman, but also of simple Jewish slaves, Mordecai and Esther, although its scene is laid entirely in a heathen land, and in cities which were full of profligacy, although Esther's advancement is that of a beautiful woman, prized in the eastern manner, for her physical attractions alone, and advanced to the place of a higher form of concubine or lower form of wife by virtue of her attractions; yet the play and byplay of all these characters fringe not on Esther's and Mordecai's advancement, not on the fall of Haman and his race, but on the great and all over-shadowing fact that the conspiracy of Haman to destroy the whole Jewish race was averted and came to grief. Had it not been for the wonderful series of incidents which is

related in that book, the doom of the whole Hebrew nation had been sealed, and it had perished from off the earth. And just as the main value of the book of Ruth does not lie in its picturesque and idyllic delineation of the life of that fair Moabitess, but in the fact that she was the grandmother of David, and so the ancestor of our blessed Lord, so the book of Esther has its chief value and thus its chief charm in the record which it gives us of the manner in which the race from



REPUTED TOMB OF ESTHER AND MORDECAI.

which our SAVIOUR was to spring, was saved from destruction by the prompt intervention of a Jewish maiden. We may see with all assurance, that had Esther not have been, our Lord Jesus had not come.

All who live where there is a Jewish population know that every spring-time, in the month of March, a feast is observed by the Hebrews, known as Purim. I have seen it announced in the daily papers, in the city where I reside. And yet few besides the Jews remember that that feast of Purim, is spoken

of in the closing chapters of Esther, and was instituted then to keep in perpetual commemoration the delivery of the Jews from the destruction planned by Haman. It is a wonderful verification of that interesting book, and is well adapted to silence the doubts of those who question the historical authenticity of the Scriptures, that in all lands the Jews still commemorate Esther, and the deliverance she wrought. This is a fact which is almost startling at first thought; and yet every Jew knows that this is the case.

Beside the book of Esther, the books of Daniel and Ezekiel, and some of the Psalms, especially the one hundred and thirty-seventh, throw light upon the condition of the Jewish nation while they were in their captivity; and reveal to us, that although theirs was indeed a state of bondage, yet that it was so lightened and mitigated, that they were hardly in a state of suffering, or even of positive ostracism. They were of common Semitic stock with those who held them in captivity, and their language had great resemblances. That broad line of demarcation which separated us from the negroes during the time of their slavery, did not enter into the condition of the Hebrews during their estate of bondage, for there was no difference in color, and whatever diversity did exist in respect of social condition and culture, was rather in favor of the Jews than of their captors. For the Babylonians were sunk in an inglorious effeminacy; their whole tone was gone, and they were in the same stage of softness and feebleness in which the Romans were at the time of the Gothic invasion; whereas the Hebrew stock was vigorous and full of hardihood. And so we see that the Jews lived rather as prosperous colonists and traders and farmers than as subject slaves; they acquired property, and gained prosperity, so much so indeed, that by far the larger number were unwilling to return. And so when the decree of Cyrus was issued, empowering the Jews to go back to the homes of the fathers, the comparatively small number of those who took advantage of the edict is accounted for. That edict has been supposed to have re-



TOMB OF CYRUS AT MURG-AUB.

sulted solely from the clemency of Cyrus; to have been dictated simply by an abounding good nature, and to have had no connection with public policy. My own conviction is, however, that it was quite as much the dictate of wisdom as of benevolence. Nothing could have been more shrewdly planned. The Jews had been so long resident in Babylonia that their attachment to that country had been secured, and their old tendency to form an alliance with Egypt had necessarily come to an end. The Babylonians, meanwhile, who had conquered and were in the possession of the mountain land of Palestine, the natural fortress between the two great rival empires on the Euphrates and the Nile, were not disposed to go up into the hills of Judah and Benjamin to take possession; and so the country was insecurely held. The band of Jews which had been left there by Nebuchadnezzar does not appear to have had any effective hold; and an act of apparent generosity, which should make the Jews return and keep their old land, and yet remain loyal to their conquerors, was one which was dictated by profound political insight. And this is what Cyrus did; and what his successors continued to do after him; and endeavoring to prevail on the Jews to go up to the land of their fathers and take possession, he took what was the only sure and wise course in the work of holding Palestine in quiet and unresisting subjection.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE RETURN FROM BABYLON.

The First Colony or Caravan that Returned—Their Course—View of Jerusalem from the East—A Scene of Desolation—The Rebuilding of the Temple—Hindrances Put in the Way—The Work Sped—The Book of Ezra—Nehemiah Goes Up with Another Colony—Ezra's Work of Reformation—The Effect Felt to the Present Day—The Restoration of the Wall—The People had a Mind to Work—Gross Evils Ceased—Nothing More Heard About a King—Synagogue Worship Began—Ceasing of Prophecy—The Editing of the Bible—Malachi—Restoration of the Sabbath—The Reform in Marriage and the Abolishment of Idolatry.



HE first caravan, which returned in the year 535, B. C., comprised but about fifty thousand souls, a small body in comparison with the former population. The second caravan which went back in 458 B. C., under the direction of Ezra was very small, numbering only about six thousand, while those who went back with Nehemiah a few years later, were still fewer. The richer Jews were not to be persuaded to leave their wealth, and return to the sterile and desolate home of their ancestors; the old tie had been broken, and only the poorer ones were willing to go back. It must have been a sad sight as that caravan of about fifty thousand souls wended their way up the valley of the Kedron, and looked upon the remains of the once proud and magnificent Jerusalem. It is the best way of approaching the city, for seen from the east, the city lies above the beholder, and has a situation which is really commanding, whereas approached by way of the north, the south or the west, it is almost insignificant, and always disappoints the visitor. But the Jews came by the road which displays it to the best advan-

tage. At the right, on the crest of Moriah lay the crumbling and blackened remains of the temple; on Zion, at the left were the fragments of the massive city which had stood there. The wall which had girded the city was a heap of ruins, and the strong gates were broken down. It was a scene of wild desolation, and must have filled the hearts of the returning company with deep sadness. They bore with them the sacred vessels, five thousand four hundred in number, which had been taken from the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and had been used for purposes of heathen revelry down in Babylon. No doubt with the number of returning Jews were many of the Ten Tribes, as well as those of Judah and Benjamin, for the whole race would naturally have made common cause while in a foreign land. From this cause, there was a partial restoration of all the tribes; at any rate, there was a restoration of representatives of all the tribes.

Their first great undertaking was the rebuilding of the temple. This work was commenced at once, and with great spirit. The leader in this enterprise was Zerubbabel, and the new temple, which was about one-third larger than the old, and much less magnificent, bore and continues to bear the name of the original builder. Various hindrances were put in the way of its continuance, especially on the part of the Assyrian colonists, who had occupied the northern kingdom, and so the work went slowly on. In fact it was not completed till after twenty-one years, and not even then excepting from the great and inspiring stimulus which was given to the people by two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, whose sayings have come down to us. These noble and faithful men tided the people and the fickle Zerubbabel over a hard place in the national history, and secured at last, the completion of the great attempt. The story of its building takes up a large part of the book of Ezra, and is told there with artless and beautiful simplicity.

The next great work which was attempted was long after this, in the time of Nehemiah. Ezra records in the early chap-



ANCIENT BOTTLES, 1 TO 7 GLASS, 8 TO 11 EARTHENWARE.
(From the British Museum collection.)



ANCIENT CUPS. (*Fairbairn*).

1, Lion Head Cup.—Sculpture, Khorsabab.—*Botta*. 2, Lion Head Cup with handle—Khorsabab.—*Botta*. 3, Cup—Sculpture, Khorsabab.—*Botta*. 4, Cup of Red Pottery—Nimroud.—*Layard*. 5, Painted Cup from Karamules.—*Layard*. 6, 7, Bronze Cups—Nimroud.—*British Museum*.



ANCIENT CUPS.—(*Fairbairn*).

1, 2, 3, From Paintings at Thebes.—*Wilkinson*. 4, Porcelain Cup.—*Wilkinson*. 5, Cup of Green Earthenware with lotus flower, painted in black.—*British Museum*. 7, Cup of Wood.—*British Museum*. 8, Cups of Arragonite.—*British Museum*. 9, Saucer of Earthenware.—*Wilkinson*.

ters of his book what took place long before his day; his own journey up to Palestine was more than a hundred years after the new temple had been built. Ezra and Nehemiah were cotemporaries, and lived and to a great extent labored side by side. Ezra was a priest and devoted his life to the collecting and editing of the Sacred Books, and to the bringing up of the morals of his people, especially in the matter of marriage. When his small caravan of about six thousand souls had reached Jerusalem, he found that almost everything was in a bad way; but the worst thing of all was that the people had formed unrestrained marriage connections with the outlying heathen tribes; and thus all kinds of evil were coming in. To the work of reformation Ezra addressed himself with characteristic zeal, and his work was signally prospered. In this good work he was ably seconded by Nehemiah, the governor of Jerusalem, a man of the rarest and noblest character. And so effectually did they stay this old and pestilent evil, that it ceased at once. Down to that time the Jews had had a most ungracious notoriety for the readiness with which they entered into marriage alliance with the heathen; but with Ezra and Nehemiah's vigorous measures, this all ceased, and down to the present day the Jews are noted for the purity of their blood. Such a thing as a marriage with a Gentile is now exceedingly rare; then it was the most common thing in the world. This is the most striking tribute to the commanding influence of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The great act of the latter was the restoration of the wall. Having been appointed governor of Jerusalem, he at once set himself to the great work of making the city secure. The temple of Zerubbabel occupied the place where that of Solomon had stood, and it contained articles of priceless worth, but it was defenceless, and the city was at the mercy of any wild horde of savages which might pour down from the hills and enter it. All sorts of hindrances were put in his way—their story is graphically told in the book of Nehemiah, but all in vain. The labor went vigorously on, "for the peo-



EAST END OF SOUTH WALL.

This massive wall supported the huge platform on which the Temple rested. The Mount of Olives appears on the right, crowned by the Church of the Ascension.

From a Photograph by J. Graham.

ple had a mind to work." Indeed such was the energy with which the undertaking was prosecuted that it was completed in fifty-two days, and from that time the city was secure. Nehemiah consecrated the wall with religious services of extraordinary splendor, and the account given by him of the processions which walked along the top, past the various gates and towers, still remains the most lucid and complete description extant, of the ancient barrier. The book of Nehemiah, like that of Ezra, is written in a delightfully graphic style, and will fascinate any one who reads it. The reforms which Nehemiah effected, were all of them of a salutary character, and left an abiding impress upon the nation.

After the return from the captivity, certain of the grosser forms of evil which had done so much to corrupt the Jews, utterly ceased. Whether from the fact that only the poorer and simpler classes returned, whether from the weight and power of their religious leaders, whether from the ideas which they derived from the people who had held them captive,—at any rate they were a changed people, and the captivity marks a crisis in their history. After the return there is nothing more heard of a visible king; the theocracy was restored in its old lines, and was stamped so deeply that it did not again disappear. The fact became known too, that God could be worshiped at other places besides Moriah; and the synagogues which had been built upon the Euphrates, were erected all over Judea. Men anticipated even the conversation of Jesus with the woman of Samaria, and acted upon the truth developed there, that God can be worshiped anywhere. Hence after the return, synagogues were common, and there was no longer the feeling that the people must go up to Jerusalem and Moriah to worship. And again, the new temple, being simpler, allowed a less ritualistic worship than had been celebrated in Solomon's edifice; and so held the people better up to a spiritual religion.

Another great event which characterized the return from the captivity, was the ceasing of prophecy, and the gathering

up of all the sacred writings to take the place of the instruction which had before been given by living prophets. This of course, was an epoch in the history of the church of God; and since that time the chief appeal of men who have been under the dominion of the Jewish and Christian religions, has been to the Sacred Scriptures. At just what time Malachi lived we do not know; it would appear that he was the last of the prophets; but there is no reason for believing that his work was subsequent to that of the others who have contributed their writings to the Old Testament. It was one of the great acts of the pious and devoted Ezra, to gather together the various works of the Hebrew literature, to suitably edit them, and to publish them to his people as the Word of God; and the work which he did has been honored down to our day, and remains, unquestionably unchanged, in the form which he gave to it.

Another great change which was brought in by Ezra and Nehemiah was the bringing back of the Sabbath to that hallowed regard which it had long lost in the eye of the people. In the work of Nehemiah this is especially emphasized; and it is clear that the day was by him appointed as worthy of a solemn observance not unlike that which was brought into vogue by the fathers of New England.

And the last great reform which was effected was the utter abolishment of idolatry. That infamous and deadly custom of worshiping the creature more than the Creator ceased with the return from Babylonia, and we see not the slightest tendency to revive it again. True other great moral evils appeared in the Jewish nation, but they were of a different type altogether from those which had been experienced before, but that great sin of idolatry which had come in with Solomon and had culminated in Manasseh, was known no more in the land of Israel.



REPUTED TOMB OF EZRA ON THE BANKS OF THE TIGRIS.

CHAPTER XXXII.

PALESTINE AFTER THE CAPTIVITY,

BY REV. G. S. DREW, AUTHOR OF "SCRIPTURE LANDS."

Limitation of the Church Land of the Hebrews to the Hill-country Around Jerusalem—New and Large Relations—Great Extent of the New Empire—By Whom it had been Conquered—The Policy of Cyrus—Egypt the Ground-work of our Conceptions—Resemblances between the Ruins of Babylon and those of Egypt—Condition of Palestine at this Time—The Character of the Men who Returned from Babylon—What Jerusalem was still to the Jews,—The Work of Nehemiah told in Greater Detail—The Men who Followed Nehemiah and Their Work.

LONG before the period which we reached in the close of the last chapter, the central Church Land of the Hebrews was limited to the hill-country around Jerusalem; nor through the long course of time which is yet before us, did it ever pass far beyond that limit. Now, however, it comes forward in important relations with the regions lying on either side of it; and first with the great kingdom on the east, of which, indeed, at this time, it formed part of the western border province. From our present point of view we must regard it in this character, and estimate its place in that vast territory which stretched in one direction from the Mediterranean to the borders of Hindostan, and, in another from the Caucasus to the Indian Sea—the dominion of Cyrus and his successors.

The extent of this was many times greater than the most considerable of the great empires which had preceded it. Indeed, all the largest of these came to be included as its provinces within its limits. It had been conquered by the first outbursts of the energy of that upper race which has

ever since maintained its supremacy in the movements of human history. Of the Arians who had gone eastward in the earliest migrations from the primeval settlements, the native vigor of some had been severely trained in the hill-country of Media and Persia. Their power had enabled them gradually to subjugate to their rule all the inferior races who had been previously established on that territory. And, as might have been expected, they had at length come down westward, in an irresistible irruption upon the communities of the Mesopotamian plain; and then, with the advantages and helps derived from subjugating them, had spread themselves over the vast surface which has been just indicated, holding together in one empire, by marvelous valor and policy, kingdoms which had separately been most remarkable in respect of their population, not less than of their wealth and their resources.

The hill-country centered around Jerusalem, formed part of the western border province of their vast territory. As a small group of hills in an extreme corner of his dominions, the great monarch at Susa thought of it, though he would never, on account of its peculiar position on the outskirts of his empire, regard it with indifference. He would look upon that mountain block as an outpost, or fortress, which might be used for the defence of his territory on that side against an attack on the part of Egypt, or which might serve as an advanced station in any meditated invasion of that country. The strength and fidelity of those who guarded such a position was evidently of great moment; and its security must often have been anxiously debated in the Persian councils. That it should be occupied by a few colonists, or by governments liable to be tampered with by Egyptian influence, was to endanger the security of the whole empire. Cyrus knew at the same time that the Hebrews in his own kingdom, and those dispersed in other parts of the world, especially in Egypt itself, fixed their eyes on the ancient city as the guardian of a divine deposit, and of their most treasured hopes for the future of their people. So long as they held Jerusalem, they

believed themselves to have the pledge of the fulfilment of that future destiny of greatness which had never been lost sight of. Marked and distinguished as they were, in all their settlements, from the people around them, and especially from their fellow captives, in nothing were they more so than in the mysterious reverence, the strength-inspiring anticipations, and the kindling memories, with which they looked from all sides to the mountains and secluded glens and valleys of their fatherland, and especially to the city of their great king, and the hill whereon his son, Solomon the Magnificent, had erected the temple, in comparison with which how despicable appeared the idol shrines that were around them in Nineveh and Babylon and in the cities of the Nile.

It may have been in partial sympathy with their feelings, as it certainly was in the fulfilment of an obvious policy, that Cyrus issued his decree that that cluster of distant hills, that fortress block in the remote corner of his dominions, should be occupied by any of the prosperous, able men then living in the Babylonian colonies and settlements who were willing to go there for that purpose. "Whosoever among you is willing," he said, "let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah." The position which they were invited or summoned to occupy was the ancient city, and the hill-country in its neighborhood. The northern provinces—all the rich and beautiful country that had been included in Samaria—were already covered with colonies; and the decree of Cyrus did not meditate, or allude to, their displacement. It was only the bare, ungenial territory that lay between this and the fertile vales around Hebron, also occupied upon the south, that was contemplated in the proclamation. This must be distinctly borne in mind when, in order to understand the spirit in which the decree was received, we transfer ourselves to the provinces around Babylon, and picture, in comparison with their circumstances there, the position which the Hebrews were invited to occupy.

In doing this we shall be helped, if we take Egypt as the

groundwork of our conceptions. But its level area must be greatly extended; and we must bear in mind that, in respect of soil and climate, nature has dealt more parsimoniously with the vaster plains of Babylon than with those on the Delta, and in the Nile valley. Still, in their main features, the resemblance between the two countries is very striking; and this would be at once recollected by many of the earlier exiles to whom Egypt was familiar. The ground was marked and covered by works of the same race. The Hamitic mind and character were expressed in both countries, by the same colossal works. In its temples and sculptures, and in its monumental effigies and decorations, Egypt, in fact, on a larger, severer scale, was reproduced on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates; and all the appliances of civilization and luxury were known there that were known in the cities that lined the Nile. When Cyrus issued his decree, the Hebrew exiles were at home in their new settlements; their ancestors for two generations backward had been there before them; and the native energy of their race had manifested itself in this new position. Protected, and in some instances favored, by their new lords, they had made for themselves homes, and acquired large possessions, in their new abodes. They were masters of many arts which they had soon learned to exercise profitably to themselves, as well as advantageously to those who, in personal capacity and vigor, were so greatly their inferiors.

Such were the circumstances which they were invited by the decree of Cyrus to exchange for the precarious and difficult position of colonists on the hill of Zion, bare of resources as it was, and covered with little else than ruins, as well as exposed to the jealousy of the adjacent tribes, and to attacks from the neighboring kingdom of Egypt. An accumulation of difficulties had to be overcome by those who accepted the invitation or summons; and, after all, what would they be but the guards of an outpost of the conqueror? Moreover, there was a long, wearisome journey to be encountered from their settlements on the Chaldean lowlands to Jerusalem. Hence



BRICK PYRAMID OF FAIOUM.

it came to pass that, in comparison with the whole number of the exiles, but few were induced to undertake the enterprise. Many gave freely of their wealth in furtherance of it; but only a small number comparatively could be induced to undertake, in the spirit of the founder of the nation, the long and perilous journey over the great desert, which, after all, they would say, only led to a toilsome and difficult, and, as some might affirm, a hopeless undertaking.

In comparison with the extent of even that part of the nation which was settled in Babylon, it was, accordingly, only a small caravan which, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, now comes in view, along the old route across the Euphrates, by the palm-groves of Tadmor, and across the desert which thence stretches to Damascus; and yet how large in comparison with that of Abraham, in whose steps they were following! Fifty thousand individuals, with their beasts of burden, formed such a company that some months were necessarily consumed in the journey, as well as in the preparation for it, which also would occupy no small time, considering not only their numbers, but the value of the treasure they carried with them, as well as their insecurity from the marauding tribes upon the road, and the jealousy with which their expedition was regarded. One would like to know the route by which they at length approached Jerusalem. Did they venture into the hill-territory of Palestine, and come down through the rich midland provinces, keeping throughout on the track of their great ancestor? Or did they, as seems more possible, take the more cautious path through the old Gilead provinces of Manasseh and Gad, crossing the Jordan by the fords of Jericho, and so make their way up the mountain paths that conducted them across the slopes of Olivet, and gave them the first view of the now ruined city, from the east? This might be preferred as the securer road; it would, besides, save them much suffering and humiliation that would be almost intolerable, as they saw the best part of the country that should have been their own free possession, and their



ORIENTAL MIGRATION.

children's inalienable heritage, in the hands of an oppressive, an ignoble, and idolatrous people, who were there polluting, with the rites of a degrading superstition, structures and sites that had been associated with their most hallowed recollections.

For this was now the condition of the country. The provinces adjacent to Jerusalem on the north were in possession of communities, which, if not perfectly heathen, had among them only a few remnants of the Hebrew faith superstitiously preserved; while, in the south, the chief towns of Judea, and the most desirable provinces of the Jewish kingdom, were in the hands of the Idumeans. So that those who came in the expedition found themselves confined to the bare, hilly country, extending only a few miles round, of which Jerusalem was the centre. They found it occupied only by the straggling remnants of the last deportation, or perhaps by a few pilgrims who were hovering in reverent, lingering affection, around the old sites of Hebrew sacredness and glory. The hills of Jerusalem itself were only covered with shattered, crumbling ruins, that were blackened by the conflagration which was kindled in the last capture and destruction of the city. Under these circumstances they entered on the toil, and the sacrifices, to which they had pledged themselves. The building up of the temple now in ruins, and the re-establishment there of Jehovah's worship in exact accordance with the prescriptions of the Mosaic ritual, the formation in this manner of a centre around which they might be faithfully and energetically combined—was the main object of the decree of Cyrus, and of the contributions which he himself, as well as the Jews remaining in Babylon, had made to these treasures. But the work, notwithstanding the large assistance they received in it, was, on account of the circumstances just named, and because of their great distance from the protecting power, of enormous difficulty, and was beset with terrible discouragements.

This should be distinctly borne in mind, in order to conceive

the struggle of the devoted men who undertook it. No doubt they were—indeed, they must have been—the chosen men of the Eastern colony, distinguished from all their compatriots by their vigor, and zeal, and high principle. Others, of similar character, and who sympathized with their purposes, would come from other countries of "the dispersion"—for the Jews were already found in every quarter of the world. Their deportation eastward had commenced one hundred and fifty years before the removal of the last company under Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon. There are traces, besides, of migrations into Egypt before that which followed the assassination of the Persian satrap. Then, in addition to their Babylonian and Egyptian settlements, many had been carried westwards, as well as still farther to the east and south, by those Tyrian and Idumean slave merchants who are so indignantly rebuked by the prophet for the cruel injury thus inflicted on the captives that had been taken in the course of the border warfare which was so incessantly occurring. At this period, therefore, at the close of the sixth century before Christ, they were already widely scattered over the inhabited world. The Jew might have been found everywhere—in the numerous cities, and over the vast plains of Western Asia, laboring in the fields and mines, and especially on the vast erections now going forward there, as again on the banks of the Nile, in the Greek colonial towns of the Mediterranean, in Athens and Sparta, in the Carthaginian settlements of Spain and Africa. In all these places he was seen, and everywhere he was looking to the very mountain block on which his enterprising countrymen were then laboring, as the central object of his hopes and veneration.

The Jews would naturally look to it as having this importance—the "hill of Zion" was still to them "a fair place, the joy of the whole earth." And it was partly in consequence of his sympathy with these feelings, as well as in the fulfilment of an obvious policy, that Cyrus had helped them in their efforts to restore it. This was not the case with his

successors. They did not regard the Hebrews with his feelings; and, in pursuit of other objects, they overlooked the local importance of this corner of their dominions. Hence the exposure of the enterprising men at Jerusalem to the vexatious annoyances which they suffered from the adjacent tribes and colonists. In that position, too, they would feel, in its full severity, the consequences of a severe blight which fell on the scanty crops of the contracted territory where they were settled. Their position, moreover, within a day's journey of the passes from the coast, made them liable, fitted as they were for effective military service, to be drafted off into the armies which now passed to and fro in that old route, on account of the Egyptian wars which were then being waged by their Persian lord. Discouraged by all these circumstances, they were continually tempted to renounce their labors; and a long period elapsed before the temple was finished, and before the sacrifices were offered up in it. And when this was done, the city was yet exposed on all sides; the walls were broken lines of ruins; the aqueducts were shattered; the most sacred sepulchres were wasted and defaced, and strewed with the fragments of the gates and buildings that were cast down on all sides. Except in the narrow spaces cleared by the few occupants of the city, it was nothing but a shapeless pile of blocks, of stones, and columns overthrown, and blackened by the conflagration with which their enemies destroyed it; so that "All who passed by still asked, Is this the city that men call perfection, the joy of the whole earth?"

Such was the state in which the second expedition under Ezra found Jerusalem, when he "sat down astonied" among the ruins. The temple, and a few private dwellings, were all the fruits of eighty years of effort. So Nehemiah heard, and mourned as he heard, and he determined to go and devote himself to the great enterprise of lifting up the daughter of Zion from her humiliation, and advancing the high and momentous destination which he believed she was appointed to accomplish. And now we see him carrying forward, upon that

narrow and secluded spot, one of the noblest works ever accomplished by one man in the annals of the Jews or of the world. Three days were enough for repose and friendly greetings; and then, unobserved, in the late night, he went with a few companions along the course of the city walls, stumbling over heaps of rubbish, down to the southern extremity of the Kedron valley, where the ruined outlines of the city, clear and silvery in the moonlight, rose high above him.* In earnest consultation he there laid the plans which months of toil, of brave patience, and strenuous effort, were needful to accomplish.

Now all around we see innumerable multitudes, in organized activity, hoisting up the huge blocks, cleansing the cornices and pillars from the blackened traces of the conflagration; working with all the vigor of their race in restoring the breaches and devastations of more than 150 years, and over all one energetic governing mind, animating them by his own example of unstinting self-devotion. They who came up westward, across the ridge of Olivet, would have in one view this boundless, unresting activity before them, and their jealous enemies—who at first scorned and mocked their efforts to raise order, and restore the city out of that wide mass of ruin and confusion, knowing nothing of the plan of that irresistible forethought and perseverance which governed all their efforts—soon changed their tone, when they saw the progress of the work, which then, by craft and violent outrage, they endeavored to impede. But courage, as well as industry, characterized that busy multitude: these workmen were such that, while they handled the trowel and mallet, they could gird on the sword, and introduce the discipline of a camp into their

* "I went out by night, . . . and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. Then went I on to the gate of the fountain and the King's Pool (the pool of Siloah, which was at the end of Tyropæon), but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass (*i. e.* on account of the heaped ruins). Then went I up in the night by the brook (the Kedron valley), and viewed the eastern wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley (in Tyropæon), and so returned."—Neh. ii. 13–15.

workyards.* Nor was Nehemiah to be either daunted or duped by the adversaries who opposed him. Irresistibly the work went forward; the old blocks that Solomon's Phœnician artisans had chiselled, were heaved up again into their places; the ancient towers, in their squared massiveness rose up once more; the doors were hung, and the beams and locks fastened to enclose the city. Once again Jerusalem was girt round, and enclosed on all sides as a fenced hight, strong and compacted within itself, as in the olden time. In all the manifestations of energy and brave endeavor which the old city had witnessed, there never was one more glorious than this of Nehemiah and his workmen. The city, being thus secured, was now also inhabited by those who voluntarily offered themselves to people and to guard it. And now it was regarded as their metropolis by the men, numbering nine times its own population, who were dispersed over the old ancestral sites from Bethel as far as Beersheba.

Thus, except in the one particular of their avowed subjection, under which, however, they seem to have been comparatively at ease, they were restored into circumstances nearly identical with those of the nation under Hezekiah. Many of the most unlikely of Isaiah's prophecies were already fulfilled in Nehemiah's time; and now, as he looked forward, with the onward gaze and forethought of one so large-minded as he, the restorer of his people, was, would he not ask, if they might not yet assert an absolute independence; and, reinforced by the arrival of their powerful and wealthy brethren from all quarters of the world, stand forward again as the people of Jehovah, and after all, accomplish the high purposes for which he had ordained them?

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*"They which builded on the walls and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. . . . . Every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me. And I said, ... The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. In what place, therefore, ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us; our God shall fight for us. So we labored in the work."—Neh. iv. 17–21.

There were reasons for such expectations, and the patriotic, high-minded men, who followed Nehemiah, and who were possessed, as he was, with a sense of the world-wide destiny of Israel, and of its divinely appointed work for mankind, would retain his hope. Yet they were often tempted to relinquish it, and especially on account of the perils they were involved in through the armed expeditions, whose march along the old road towards Egypt and from it, they could almost witness as they looked from their mountain hights. Their anticipations, however, would revive when tidings of the utter, and it proved the final, subjugation of that country reached them. Now the whole eastern world was subject to the dominion of their sovereign; and they stood in the center of his vast territory, having living connections with every part of it.* The head of silver, in Daniel's prophecies; the ram, with his two horns, was paramount. Might they not form "the belly and thigh of brass," the conquering goat, and overthrow this empire, with which their own relations were closer and more universal, than that of the victorious race under which they were in subjection?

This conjecture will not seem extravagant, if now, taking our station on the settlements where they were at this time standing more firmly than ever, we consider them in relation to the great empire, of which they formed a part—or, at all events, it will guide and inform us in the survey. For what was their real position? This narrow, mountainous province of theirs—of which, as we have said, their great ruler, if he ever thought of it separately, would think only as a cluster of hill forts, occupied by a stern, intolerant people, who might

*For it must be remembered that the Persians were now supreme on the Mediterranean. "Maritime commerce had much greater facilities under the Persians than under the Egyptian kings, and the sea was less infested by pirates."—Niebuhr, *Ancient History*, vol i. p. 313. Now, accordingly, the dwellers in Jerusalem, "set in the midst of the nations and countries round about her," had means of communication with the whole world which they had never possessed before.

serve the purpose of a strong garrison against the wandering marauders of the desert, or as the keepers of a citadel in case of a revolt—this chain of Judean hills, thus occupied, was, in fact, the nucleus, the beloved and venerated center of a race of whom he would now find members in every province of the empire. Their numbers and power, in the old settlements beyond the Euphrates, are well known; and to that land they had ancestral bonds. The original founder of their nation had come out from thence. On the other side, upon the south, they were almost as numerous in Egypt, and with that country also they were connected by historic ties. Their ancestors had held estates in it. One of its most illustrious benefactors had been their countryman. Moreover, prophecy clearly marked out a future and most momentous connection between the Hebrew and Egyptian destinies. Thus, not in Palestine alone, but over the whole range of the universal empire, they had not only a station, but a property, besides. Then, again, a property in the future, as well as in the past, was claimed for them by the inspired seers, who had implicated Assyria as well as Egypt in their after fortunes.* Nor were Asia, and Egypt, with its bordering lands, only in this close connection with the Judean hights. Europe had already received, in freights of captives, large communities of Hebrews within its limits.† These speculators, whom we have imagined on Mount Zion, might, therefore, add,—"In the event of any rising, and if on this central ground we ever raise our sceptre aloft above

*"The Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel shall be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."—Isa. xix. 23–25.

†"O Tyre and Sidon, . . . ye have sold the children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem unto the Javanites, that ye might remove them far from their border."—Joel iii. 6. Comp. Ezek. xxvii. 13. An extensive slave trade had been carried on long before the Captivity both by the Phœnicians and Greeks.—Kenrick's *Phœnicia*, 205, 271. Delos was their great slave mart; and thence, probably, the Jewish captives spoken of by the prophet had been sent in large numbers into all parts of the world. It is said that as many as ten thousand slaves were sold in Delos in one day.

the nations, the resources of the West are also at our command." Over and above all this, they knew themselves to be at least a match, in energy and prowess, with any of the races they had been brought in contact with, the Grecian not excepted; and why might they not take the next turn in the succession of universal empire; and, in an absolute lordship over Mede, and Persian, and Syrian, and Egyptian, carry forward through another stage a fulfilment of the predictions of their seers.

They, indeed, who looked deeper into the purport of their mission, and the law of Jehovah's government of men, would see that this establishment of another Babel empire could never be the work of that people whom He had called, and set up expressly for the purpose of maintaining an earnest protest against such rule. But the speculation might have well been entertained. And though it was disturbed at first, it would be afterwards strengthened, when the reins of universal empire passed into the hands of the young hero of the west. The events predicted by the beloved seer were evidently still in progress: the silver dominion was succeeded by the "brazen." The change had been favorable for them, when the earnest monotheism of the Persian had succeeded that which had become the fanatical, as well as puerile, idolatry of the Egyptian. But, how much better was the enlightened tolerance and active favor of the Grecian sovereign. They would exult, therefore, in the successes of Alexander, even at the beginning of them, when, perhaps, some fond hopes were being disturbed by him. And when, in a few years more, tidings reached them of his irresistible progress and unlimited conquests in the distant East, and of his persistence there in the line of favor and protection which he was showing to their people, the happiest, the most animating expectations might be indulged by them. They had, indeed, only changed their masters, but the change was such as to assure them afresh of the prescience of their seer, and of the divine guardianship over them. It en-

couraged the highest anticipations on their part. For was not an iron power to succeed, and to prove mightier than all that had previously been set up? That power was to be the last; and where was it, whence could it originate, except among themselves?

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE LAND OF THE MACCABEES.

BY REV. G. S. DREW.

The Empire of Alexander and the Place of Palestine in it—Changes Going Forward—Alexandria and Egypt—The Ptolemaic Restorations—The Extension of the Syro-Grecian Power—Course of Affairs at Jerusalem—Philosophizing Tendencies—The Fidelity of Judas Maccabæus—A Period of Depression—Hopes of Finding the Dispersed Jews—The Maccabean Kingdom—The Conquest by Rome.



HOEVER considers the position of that mountain province in the very midst of the widely extended empire of Alexander, remembering its own sacredness, and that of the city built on it, in the eyes of the powerful people then largely dispersed over the whole empire, and who, beyond that sea which was there almost in view of them, had the resources of the rising West, as well as of the East, at their command—will not deem the expectation that they should form the fourth and last in the predicted series of kingdoms unreasonable. But the very position which made that hope so plausible, caused it to be rudely and violently broken up, for, after a very few years, that new series of disasters, which they found had also come within their prophet's range, began. Their mountain territory became the battle-ground between the kings of the South and of the North. The highland block of Judea lay just midway between their territories. And, besides being important as commanding the frontiers of whichever kingdom gained it, it was further so on account of the sacredness that invested the city built on it. Whoever held Jerusalem had in his possession the means of weakening the allegiance of large bodies of subjects in the

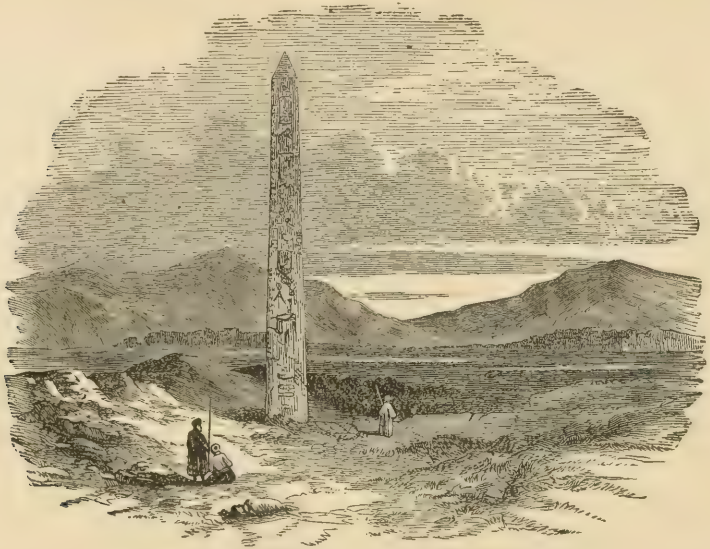
neighboring kingdom. The contest was, therefore, most furious, and it brought on the people calamities which could not have been endured, if they had not found this very emergency delineated with the utmost plainness in their sacred rolls, and a vista of hope beyond it opened out before them. In the strength of this hope some of the men, an elect "remnant of the election," firmly held their position in the bare ungenial region which was now exposed to such danger, which was the scene of such terrible calamity. They would not retire from their charge, either south, or north, or east, into the colonies of their prosperous countrymen, settled in those quarters. But, in the villages, and hill stations centered around Jerusalem, they dwelt on the sacred associations which connected every spot they looked on with some venerable name, and the whole territory with the great hope which would yet be realized. So they nourished their faithfulness, in preparation for other trials, far severer than even these inroads and invasions, to which it was going to be subjected.

These trials resulted from the change of mind and feeling which was gradually being effected among their countrymen. We may best illustrate this change by looking to the condition of those settled in Egypt, since that country was the main source of the influences which wrought these effects; from Egypt they spread, with its intellectual culture, over all other countries where the Jews were settled. Their chief colony in Egypt was Alexandria. Whoever made his way, at this period, along either of the broad streets of the city, would recognize among the busiest of its merchants and artisans, the same marked visage which was already becoming familiar in the great highways, and in the chief cities of that age. If, coming from the south his course took him straight down to the open wharves, there were the Jew traders, over their huge corn heaps, engaged more energetically than any others in the grain commerce of the great seaport. Or, let him turn eastward and he would find himself in the Hebrew quarter of the city, which was filled with the sons of Abraham, and was al-

ready conspicuous by the splendid synagogue where they met every Sabbath day to hear Moses and the Prophets. Their history was not unknown to their compatriots. In the Museum and Library, which were hard by their quarter of the city, their sacred books were familiar in the language chiefly spoken in Alexandria; and the priests of the Serapeum often heard of the marvelous history, and high anticipations of this people, of their poetry and wisdom. Nor was this the only city marked and distinguished by their presence. Besides Tanis, and Pelusium, and Memphis, they had formed another settlement on the borders of their old Goshen territory, hard by the city of On, which was so illustrious in their regards by the memories of Joseph, and where, not long after this period, they even built a temple in imitation of that at Jerusalem, and on a more splendid scale. Indeed, so numerous were they at this period in the country—in which, as was said, prophecy as well as history gave them an interest—that Egypt must have seemed hardly less sacred than Palestine itself in their regards.

They who then dwelt there, were exposed to a danger of which the signs and tokens are perceptible enough in monuments which are yet extant. The most numerous of them are the Ptolemaic "restorations," as they are called. They all betoken the vague, generalizing philosophy whose special tendency was to melt away that stern, objective exclusiveness of the Jewish faith, which was the main element of its animating strength.* Jews in Alexandria held this faith, indeed, but they held it at this time with relaxed hold, and in a Grecian spirit, as a theme for meditation rather than as a princi-

* The best preserved buildings in Egypt, as at Denderah, Esneh, Edfoo, and Philæ, belong to this period. They all betoken a formal copying of the old types, apart from any vital sympathy with their spirit. (See *Extracts from Journal.*) The great museum of Alexandria also was now adorned by the sphinxes and obelisks of Thebes, Memphis, and the old cities of the Delta. All this betokened just such an age, lacking a genuine development of its own life, as would encourage that loose, generalizing philosophy, which is well known to have risen up in Alexandria at that period, and the influence of which on the Jews was marked by the heretical teaching of Sadoc, (cir. 250 B. C.,) the founder of the Sadducees.



PLAIN AND OBELISK OF HELIOPOLIS, OR ON.

The city itself has passed into ruin; nothing remains but a tangle of shrubbery and this Obelisk.

ple of active life. This fact may be connected, not indistinctly or uncertainly, with the peculiar influences of scenery and climate that were around them. Jews of the pure Jewish type must be looked for only in Palestine and in its southern provinces. The severe conditions needed for its culture were not found in Egypt. There must be harsh and bracing influences in the climate, and nature must be parsimonious in her gifts, where the Hebrew nature is found in its perfection. So it was that these same influences had not yet, at all events, wrought with serious effect upon the residents in Palestine. Compared with their compatriots in Egypt, they were free. Yet its power was not unfelt by them. This sinister attachment to the Greek philosophy, this employment of Plato as an interpreter of Moses and the prophets, had already reached Jerusalem, though, as yet, its influence there was far smaller than in the neighboring communities.

There, however, it was felt more and more, and it was constantly increased and strengthened by the course of events at this period. The eastward extension of the Syro-Grecian power, denoted by the erection of Seleucia, would bring the same influences to bear on the Jewish communities in Mesopotamia, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, and in Media. And when this power was constrained to move back westward, it brought with it, absorbed into its ranks, large numbers of the eastern Jews. Nor did they abide in Antioch, and in the northern cities of Syria. In the next movement of the age we see the Syrian armies, with their Jewish cohorts, moving southward and renewing, on the old battle-ground, the contest between the kings of Syria and of Egypt. The progress of these contests gives us a repetition of the earlier pages of their history, in the march of armies to and fro, over frontier ground. But now the devastation to be noted as consequent on their position, is not of material property, but of the convictions and habits of the nation's soul. These Greeks, with their levies or brigades of Grecized Jews, could not make their way to and fro amidst the Hebrew communities of Pal-

estine, without conveying moral and intellectual influences, which tended to strengthen those that had already wrought on them from Egypt; and the result of the war, in the alliance compacted between that country and Syria, carried forward, of course, and deepened the disastrous work, until, at length, towards the close of the reign of Antiochus the Great, the temple in Jerusalem began to be rivalled by the Grecian gymnasia and theaters that were rising up around it; debates in Platonic style and dialogue were carried on in the groves and cloisters of the city; Greek costumes and habits were adopted; the distinctive marks of Judaism were suppressed. Firm and rigorous attachment to the law was discouraged. And as before the whole territory of Palestine, harsh, and rugged, and ungenial, compared with the luxurious regions of the north and south in Syria and Egypt, was the retreat of Hebrew fidelity, of the Puritan Jew, as we may call him; so now, in Palestine itself, he was forced to retire to its most secluded regions, away from the great thoroughfare, on its bleak hill-sides, in its austerest solitudes, in its most retired and lonely glens.*

What they there heard of the course of affairs in Jerusalem, must have smitten them with atheistic despair, if, recurring to their sacred rolls, they had not been able to assure themselves that this period also, these treasonable concessions on the part of men in authority, this "cleaving" to Greece and Egypt "with flatteries," these "falls of men of understanding,"—were in the view of their inspired seer; and that beyond this hour of trial, he saw a better period, a day of triumph for Jehovah's cause. Nothing else, surely, could have sustained them when they heard of the heathenizing processes that were going forward under Jason's influence;

*Modin, the home of the Maccabees, has been identified by Dr. Robinson (*Bib. Res.* iii. 151), with El-Latrôu, a village on the west side of the Judean hills, in the road from Ramleh to Jerusalem. The army which Judas at once raised is a sign that his family was one of a considerable class, who must have been settled in retired places of the kind: the city, at this time, was no home for men of habits and convictions such as theirs.

of his deputations to Antioch, of his attempts to implicate the Jews, and employ their treasures, in the games at Tyre; then of his reception of Antiochus at Jerusalem, and of the permitted insults and the accepted scorn which those fresh from the magnificent city and luxurious groves of the Orontes, poured upon Jerusalem, that appeared to them so humble, compared with Antioch, so austere and so repulsive. How all these feelings were deepened when they heard that they, Jehovah's people, were now the subject of debate and arbitration in a senate far away beyond that sea, on which some of them could look from their village homes. And yet had not those "ships of Chittim," whose sails whitened their horizon, been introduced into their prophet's vision? Nay, from that barbarous western people, of whose prowess rumors had already reached them, the iron sceptre and kingdom might arise! So Daniel ministered to them strength and consolation when it was so needful. He was the instrument of supporting their confidence in prospect of those days of trial which —when they met in lonely scenes, every one of which must have been marked by some hallowed memory, or when they assembled in the scanty companies that went up to the feasts upon Mount Zion—they told one another were assuredly at hand.

How soon those days came, and how terrible they were, and how shameful the cause and pretext of them, is well known. That loosening of all hold upon objective truth, that evaporation of all reality in vague philosophizing, which Jason introduced, manifested itself in his case in its old and necessary alliance with feebleness and baseness of disposition. No doubt Antiochus, in his late visit to Jerusalem, had tried to the utmost the obsequiousness of the high priest; and he might well rejoice, therefore, when he heard the rumor of the tyrant's death. Yet his cowardly abandonment of the people to the vengeance of the tyrant, would sting with double shame the noble men, who, in their austere seclusion, were watching these procedures at a distance. That which they suffered was



ANTAKIA THE MODERN REPRESENTATIVE OF ANTIOCH.

more intolerable than cruel death, when they heard what things were transacted in the Holy City. Worse than torments and execution was it that no one was there to resist the horrible sacrilege which was carried forward on the ancient seat of God, and the dreadful acts of guilt that were forced upon unwilling but helpless victims. When they heard these things, their strong frames were shaken with an agony that would have crushed them, if again the sacred roll had not warned them of it all, and told them that now was the crisis-hour in which men like themselves might come forward in the old spirit of Joshua, and Moses, and Nehemiah, "to be strong and do exploits."

The officers who came down coastward, among the hills, would have trembled on their mission, if they had known the purposes that were being cherished there, and how the lion of Judah was not extirpated, but had retired only deeper into his lair, with an inexorable God-supported strength, which might never be overcome. How mighty and irresistible that purpose was, how low and base in comparison were the men with whom they contended, was shown even in their first defeat. Those corpses that lay, on the eve of the Sabbath day, in the "secret places of the wilderness," helped in that great battle when Judas—on the very ground where Joshua had triumphed, in the pass of Beth-horon—chased his foes down through the Aijalon valley into the Sharon plains, and began the career of triumph which soon brought him up, laden with spoil, across the western road, into the polluted city. Not only had those martyrs witnessed to that strength of purpose and principle, which made their brethren irresistible, but they infused it, besides, with redoubled power, into the conquerors. And now, from the central station of Palestine, another aspect is cast over Judea; now once more it is assuming its ancient vesture: Jerusalem casts off the Grecian costume that had been forced on her, and is arrayed, for a season, in the beautiful garments of her Lord.

Those warriors who had just fought so bravely at Emmaus,

true descendants of Nehemiah's associates as they were, set themselves to toil on the broad shadeless rocks of Zion and Moriah, to cast away, and with a relentless purpose to demolish, all the tokens of the late heathenism that had polluted the sacred place. They displayed amazing energy in this undertaking, for their enemies were yet in the midst of them; the citadel was not yet captured; and they were threatened with invasion from the northern provinces. Their work, however, was accomplished; and in severest conformity to the Mosaic ordinances. The Kedron, the Tyropeon, were now piled high with fragments of Grecian cornices and columns; for a strong protest was needed, not only against the recent heathenism of Jason and his party, but, in this case and as respected the temple, against the innovations of Onias, who had decorated in Alexandrian fashion the Jewish temple at Heliopolis. Men like Judas and his associates, would, under such circumstances, be intolerant of every approach, however distant, to such symptoms of apostasy, as they would deem them; and accordingly, in the structures which now rose upon Moriah, there was the severest, sternest exclusion of every feature which savored of any approximation to the system on which they believed Jehovah's curse was resting. These puritan Jews,—all honor to their noble protest—dealt in puritan spirit with the architecture, the symbols, the robes, even the gestures which betokened an alliance, however distant, with the idolatry which they were raised up and strengthened to overthrow.

Yet the severe fidelity of Judas seemed likely to ruin the cause to which he was devoted. It raised up against him a strong faction that stopped the career of his own victories on the east of Jordan, and the successes of his brother Simon in Galilee, which, had they been seconded, would have put the victors in possession of the whole country that had been divided amongst the tribes in Joshua's allotment. In fact, large portions of this territory were subdued by them. Yet they were now obliged to retire, and to defend their southern

borders against the combined force of Edomites and Greeks, who employed against them the methods of Indian warfare. As in the highland wars of Eastern Persia, trained elephants were driven by their enemies through the narrow valleys, and over the low hills of Judea. And yet again the Maccabean cohorts were triumphant, so that the Syrian King was forced to sue for permission to pass homewards through what may again be called Jewish territory.

The success of Judas' enterprise had, however, been in imminent peril from the treachery of his countrymen; and now, accordingly, at this crisis, rather than again trust them, he appealed to the Romans, whom he then recognized, as his letter shows, to be the holders of the iron sceptre which Daniel had foreshown. This was the first time when they came into direct relations with the country over which they afterwards exercised such power. Yet before they could send the promised succor—indeed, before the ambassadors of Judas returned with tidings of their reception by the Senate—he, in averting a new peril, was slain. The factious opponents of his severe zeal for the purity of the Mosaic ritual triumphed for awhile; and, in consequence of the loss and heavy discouragement occasioned by his death, his family were obliged to retire from the city.

Then followed a period of depression, in which the constancy of the Maccabees and that of their earnest associates, was severely tried. They were driven into that parched and rugged wilderness country, which lies east, and south, and north-east of Jerusalem. From Tekoah, the scene of Jehoshaphat's triumph, to Michmash, which was associated with the early struggles of their first king, Jonathan and his army were seen wandering among the barest and most arid regions of Judea. Old memories, everywhere haunting this wild territory, were especially mighty in their sustaining influence. But the men who were now there had even a harder task than fell upon those heroes who had first made this country illustrious. Regions that were tolerable to their ancestors, the

warriors of a thousand years ago, furnished no homes for a generation on which the influences of high Egyptian and Grecian civilization had been exerted. Those naked, shadeless hills, which had been trying even to those who were just emerging from their Bedouin nomadic life, were incomparably more trying to men who had never practised, much less been familiar with, such usages. They, therefore, gladly, and it would seem by some relaxation of the severity of their deceased brother, embraced the opportunity of forming an alliance with their more yielding countrymen. And, accordingly, we find them returning to their ancient city, and engaged there in what seems to have been a general effort to restore it after a model less severe. The subsequent histories of Jonathan and Simon lead to this conclusion. Policy, too nearly kindred with Grecian craft, appears to have enabled them to keep terms with the unscrupulous men who were then contending for the Syrian ascendancy. They accepted the offers of him who bade highest for their allegiance; and the appearance of Jonathan, in his priestly robes, at the marriage of Alexander Balas at Ptolemais, and his share in the festivities at this great seaport, which was now gay and splendid with all forms of heathen pomp—were a token and indication that a Grecizing aspect, in compromise between the two Jewish parties, was being cast over the whole country which had been subjected to the recovered government. They were now, indeed, in the midst of active influences, and of exciting events, which were of such a nature that nothing could have averted these ominous changes, except the firmest faith and the most absolutely unbroken union. In the absence of these there was nothing to counteract the tendencies which now wrought upon the country from the West, not less than, as heretofore, from the North and South. For, at this time, influences were exerted from this quarter which demand attention, if we would correctly estimate the significance of the Jewish history in this stage of it.

The frequent intercourse which was now being opened up

through the comparatively crowded seaports, with the western isles and continent, appears to have given them hopes of finding some of "the dispersion" who had been carried away in the earlier captivities. And it was under an impression that the Spartans might be thus identified, that they now entered into renewed communications with Lacedemon, a land like theirs, and nourishing a race kindred in spirit with their own. These communications, along with their close connection with Egypt, and their active intercourse, especially as auxiliary soldiers, with Syria, made their country still more what we have described it, a Grecized-Hebrew, rather than a Jewish-Hebrew kingdom. For distinction's sake, and as a ground of political separation, they, however, maintained their profession as followers of Moses; and this outward form and character —merely outward, undoubtedly, in the great body of the nation—served as an enclosure that guaranteed security to the more earnest spirits of their community, who still kept the witness and traditions of the faith in pure integrity, and saved their countrymen from the guilt and danger of open, unconditional apostasy.

They who belonged to this elect remnant in the midst of the election were still numerous, as is evident from the significant clause appended to what may be called the license, or patent, of Simon as their supreme head. "The Jews and the priests were pleased that Simon should be their governor and high priest forever, until there should arise a faithful prophet." This may be regarded as the final protest of the Puritan party at this time, when, their independence having been recognized, they were assuming a nation's place amongst the nations.

For not until this period may we think of the Maccabean territory as a kingdom. It had never until now extended far beyond the limits of the ground assigned to the restored exiles by the Persians. Now, however, under John Hyrcanus, Simon's son and successor, Jerusalem became the center of a kingdom, rather larger than that of Hezekiah. Tribute was no longer paid to the Syrian king. Shechem and Samaria, the

towns on the Philistine coast, and the Idumean settlements in the neighborhood of Hebron, were included in the dominions of Hyrcanus. This absorption by him of the Idumean into the Hebrew nation, and his renewed appeal to the Romans, showed, however, that Hyrcanus did not meditate a pure monarchy, but one that might take its place homogeneously with those empires rising up north and west of him, amongst which his now well-compacted realm might assume a good position. This purpose was furthered by his breach with the Pharisees, whose views were already ossifying into the lifeless forms of Rabbinism. They ceased to uphold a living protest, such as might have reanimated or restored a pure Hebrew life. The inferior natures among them dried and stiffened into the form of the typal Pharisees; while the rest, hopeless and depressed, retired into the ascetic communities which began at this time to form themselves in the wilderness neighborhood of Jerusalem, especially in the parched solitudes along the Kedron valley. The dreary, scorched, and rugged border country, west of the Dead Sea, now contained, in the communities of the Essenes, the heart and nucleus of that faithful company for the protection of which, Palestine was still maintained in its integrity, secure, and in comparative independence.

That it was thus maintained, notwithstanding the turbulent character of Alexander Janneus, who almost immediately succeeded John Hyrcanus, may be explained by its position. His restless, aggressive spirit, his reckless alienation from his countrymen—especially as shown in his employment of large bodies of mercenary troops—his ill success in war—would assuredly, at any other period, have again reduced his realm into absolute subjection, and caused it to be absorbed into the dominion either of the kings of the South or of the North. But all through the reign of Janneus these kingdoms were themselves divided and in peril; and the position of Palestine was just such as to keep it clear, under a government like that of Janneus, of any ruinous implication in their affairs.

There was civil strife between the different branches of the (dependent) royal family of Egypt, both in that country itself, and in its island dependencies in the Levant. Syria,—now under Tigranes, the Armenian king,—was suffering beneath the same calamity, and was, besides, fully and unsuccessfully occupied in defending its boundaries from the slow but irresistible aggression of the Roman power. Now, the Asmonæan territory itself, occupied with internal strifes, was so placed between these powers, that it could not be drawn into their contentions. Thus its position kept it separate, fenced it round in this period of its greatest jeopardy, so that it was not absorbed as it would otherwise have been, either in the Egyptian or the Syrian dominion. This, as we now well know, was needful for the highest purposes; and, by its circumstances and position, this object was secured, until the advancing Roman empire came, in due time, to cast over it that shielding protection under which it continued during the century and a half of its remaining history.

For the purpose of furnishing such protection, the invariable policy of the Romans, and the free philosophizing spirit that then obtained in the republic, eminently fitted it. Unlike Egypt and Syria, it was content with the political allegiance of the nations it intermeddled with, and left them free in all matters of theology and worship. Doubtless it was on account of their knowledge of this rule and law of Roman conquest, that the application of Judas and of John Hyrcanus to the republic, for alliance and arbitration, had been permitted by the people, and that they had acquiesced when the ambassadors of the greatest of the western powers entered into their city. And it was in natural pursuance of the same policy that Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, the two rival claimants of the Maccabean throne, consented to that submission of their titles to Pompey and his generals, which brought him, with his iron legions, first into Jerusalem. Besides, had they not precedents in their earlier history for such a step? Had not Ahaz

also gone up to Damascus, to the Assyrian king, for succor and for counsel? They accordingly went, each with a large escort for the safety of the heavy bribes which he carried with him, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem anxiously waited to learn whether Aristobulus, with his laxer policy of concession to Greek influences, or Hyrcanus, with the Pharisees, and with his Edomite counselor, who was, like all proselytes, attached to the more rigid party—was henceforth to have ascendancy. Their doubts were not, however, solved when the former returned to them defeated, since he was resolved on further contest. But, then, sad forebodings were added to their uncertainty; for it was not likely that the successful Roman, who had hitherto trampled down and crushed all opposition in his rise and progress, would brook such an opposition to his decision between their opposing claims.

Besides, remarkable success had lately attended his great expedition for the subjection of Arabia. The Jews would remember the march of their forefathers, under Moses, on the very same desert track which Pompey was now traversing on his way to Petra; the subjection of that rock-girt city had been one of the greatest achievements of their most valiant kings; and now they heard that the Roman triumvir had effected it, thus possessing himself of the old track of Solomon's commerce, to the head of the Eastern Gulf of the Red Sea. Then followed the tidings that this irresistible conqueror, breathing vengeance upon Aristobulus and his party, was on his way from the balsam-groves of Jericho, up the steep and craggy path that led thence to Jerusalem. A few hours more, and they descried the steadfast and irresistible legions, coming in sight along the winding road on the south of Olivet! No invader before had ever brought his troops up against them upon that side of their city. But there the world-famed veterans were, and there was the triumvir himself—the reserved strong man that had toiled and fought his way upward to his almost supreme station in the empire. There was only one other man in the world who could dispute the claim of

Pompey to absolute ascendancy; and how, then, could Aristobulus venture to resist his?

He, on the other hand, during the weeks in which he waited there for the Tyrian engines, for which he sent as soon as he had scanned with his practised eye the towered defences of the city,—would marvel at the inexorable resolution of the men entrenched in those narrow limits; for Jerusalem seemed to him little more than a hill fort, in comparison with many which only a few weeks had sufficed to crush. The Roman eagle glared with imperial contempt on the impotent resistance. But the lion of Judah was at bay, and frowned back with as high disdain. Soon, however, he was made to quail beneath the mighty instruments and the invincible discipline of the Roman army. Closer and closer, in irresistible advance, the huge towers were moved over the ravines north of the temple, now filled up with the stones and beams of the battered wall. Then through the breaches, and over scaling ladders, the irresistible assault was made; and the desecrating effigy soon rose high above the temple mount; "the abomination that maketh desolate" was set up in the holy place; and even into the Most Holy the heathen conqueror strode onward. The dying priests, who lay wounded beside the altar, saw him lift the purple veil, look with scornful wonder on the empty space, and return to his work of vindictive devastation.

When Pompey left Jerusalem, that work was terribly complete. The walls of the city were again overthrown; the temple, dishonored by his sacrilege, was once more in ruins. Their treasures, indeed, were spared. But their brief liberty was at an end; Judea was now only a Roman province. The mourners who carried the dead down the slopes of Jehoshaphat into the sepulchre hewn there in the mount, would rather desire than commiserate the lot of the departed; for had not they been the last partakers of Hebrew freedom in Jerusalem? Nothing but humiliation was henceforth before them, for the conqueror was already engaged in imposing his

own laws upon the subject provinces; and he had declared his intention to take the rebellious Maccabean, with his two sons, to adorn and illustrate his triumph in the great western city, which had become what Jerusalem might have been, the ruling city of the world.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE HOLY PLACES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Difference Between the Old and New Testaments in Respect to Geographical Importance—The Holy Places Narrated—Bethlehem—The Church of Helena—The Grotto of the Nativity—Nazareth—Grotto in the Latin Convent—Spring Near the Greek Church—House at Loretto—Origin of the Legends—Jerusalem—The Unimportant Localities—Church of the Ascension—Tomb of the Virgin—Garden of Gethsemane—The Cœnaculum—Church of the Holy Sepulchre—The Rock of Golgotha—Diversity of Sects—Greek Easter—The Holy Fire—Other Places of Interest—The Travels of St. Paul—Patmos.



N the Old Testament, the study of the hallowed soil of Palestine is the constant helper of him who seeks to trace aright the onward flow of the sacred story. It is simply impossible to read the Old Testament intelligently without one be well grounded in biblical geography, so closely is its spirit held in solution by the letter, so closely is the word of God incarnate in the men and places that the older books of the Bible bring into view. But the New Testament is quite different. The record of Christ's life and works is so entirely spiritual, that it becomes almost a matter purely incidental where Jesus lived and wrought. And to a great extent is it so with the story of the planting of Christianity, and the letters of the apostles to the infant churches. It is true we do take a pleasure in following Paul, and seeing him advance from post to post scattering the word; and thus sacred geography has its service even in the New Testament, but it is quite subordinate to the subject matter of the work. And very many of the very best Christians who have ever lived, have known nothing at all about the places mentioned in the book which has guided them to their salvation.



BETHLEHEM.

Among the places which must stand foremost in any effort to tell the story of our Saviour's life, are Bethlehem and Nazareth, the place of Jesus' birth, and the scene of his childhood and youth. They have been so well described by Dean Stanley, that we are tempted to transcribe his vivid pictures from his fascinating Sinai and Palestine. To them we subjoin his brief, but satisfactory sketch of the Jerusalem of the New Testament, which we may add as a pendant to that which we have already given in our studies of the life of David.

Whether from its being usually the first seen by travelers, or from its own intrinsic solemnity, there is probably none which produces so great an impression at first sight as the Convent of the Nativity at Bethlehem. It is an enormous pile of buildings, extending along the ridge of the hill from west to east, and consisting of the Church of the Nativity, with the three convents, Latin, Greek, and Armenian, abutting respectively upon its north-eastern, south-eastern, and south-western extremities. Externally there is nothing to command attention beyond its size—the more imposing from the meanness and smallness of the village, which hangs as it were on its western skirts. In the church itself the only portion of peculiar interest is the nave—common to all the sects, and for that very reason deserted, bare, discrowned, but in all probability the most ancient monument of Christian architecture in the world. It is all that now remains of the Basilica, built by Helena herself, the prototype of those built by her Imperial son at Jerusalem, beside the Holy Sepulchre and at Rome, over the graves of St. Paul and St. Peter. The long double lines of Corinthian pillars, the faded mosaics, dimly visible on the walls above, as in the two Churches of St. Apollinaris at Ravenna, the rough ceiling of beams of cedar from Lebanon, still preserve the outlines of the Church, once blazing with gold and marble—in which Baldwin was crowned, and which received its latest repairs from our own Edward IV.

From this, the only interesting portion of the upper church, we descend to that subterranean vault, over which, and for

CAVE OF THE NATIVITY.

which, the whole structure was erected. There, at the entrance of a long winding passage, excavated out of the limestone rock, of which the hill of Bethlehem is composed, the pilgrim finds himself in an irregular chapel, dimly lighted with silver lamps, and containing two small recesses, nearly opposite each other. In the northernmost of these is a marble slab, which marks the supposed spot of the Nativity, with the rays of the silver star, sent from Vienna in 1852, to supply the place of that which the Greeks—truly or falsely—were charged with having stolen. In the southern recess, three steps deeper in the chapel, is the alleged stall, in which, according to the Latin tradition, was discovered the wooden manger or "præsepe," now deposited in the magnificent Basilica of S. Maria Maggiore at Rome, and there displayed under the auspices of the Pope, every Christmas day.

Let us pause for a moment in the dim vault, between the two recesses; let us dismiss the consideration of the lesser memorials which surround us on all sides—the altar of the Magi—of the Shepherds—of Joseph—of the Innocents—to which, probably, no one would now attach any other than an imaginative importance, and ask what ground there is for believing or disbelieving the tradition which invites us to confine the awful associations of the village of Bethlehem within these rocky walls. Alone, of all the existing local traditions of Palestine, this one indisputably reaches beyond the time of Constantine. Already in the second century, "a cave near Bethlehem" was fixed upon as the place where, "there being no place in the village, where he could lodge, Joseph abode, and where accordingly Christ was born and laid in a manger." And this seems to have been the constant tradition of the place, even amongst those who were not Christians, in the next generation, and to have been uniformly maintained in the Apocryphal Gospels, which have always exercised so powerful an influence over the popular belief of the humbler classes of the Christian world, both in the East and the West. It is perhaps invidious to remark upon the deviations from the Gos-

pel narrative, which tells us that the want of room was not in the village, but in the inn; and that the hardship was not that they were driven from the village to the inn, but from the inn to the manger. Such a deviation implies, perhaps, an independent origin of the local tradition, but not necessarily its falsehood. And if at Bethlehem the caves in the limestone rock, on which the village stands, were commonly used as elsewhere in Palestine for horses and cattle, the omission of all allusion to the cave in St. Luke's narrative would be, to a certain extent, explained. On the other hand, the general impression of the account in Justin is certainly different from that of St. Luke; and if (with the tradition which Justin seems to have followed, and which has unquestionably prevailed since the time of Jerome) we lay the scene of the Adoration of the Magi on the same spot, it is positively irreconcilable with the words of St. Matthew, that they came into the "*house* where the young child was." We must add to this the often-repeated suspicion which Maundrell was the first to express, which attaches to the constant connection of the several localities of Palestine with grottoes and caves. However much it may be urged that, in a country like Palestine, natural excavations are unavoidably employed for purposes of dwelling, of sepulture, of rest, for which in Europe they never would be used, yet for this very reason there would be a disposition to attach events to them, if the real locality had been forgotten. If, for example, in the case now in question, the caravanserai or khan had been swept away in the convulsions of the Jewish war, and the inhabitants of Bethlehem had any wish to give a local habitation to the event which made their village illustrious, they would almost inevitably fix on a strongly-marked natural feature, such as the cave of the convent must, in its original aspect, have been. And another motive leading to the same result transpires through the same passage of Justin which first mentions the tradition, namely, the attempt to find a fulfillment of a fancied prediction of the Messiah's birth in the LXX. translation of

the words of Isaiah, "He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be in a 'lofty cave of the strong rock.'"

One further objection to the identity of the whole scene must be mentioned in conclusion. During the troubled period of the invasion of Ibrahim Pasha the Arab population of Bethlehem took possession of the convent, and dismantled the whole of the recess of that gilding and marble which is the bane of so many sanctuaries, European and Asiatic. The native rock of the cave was disclosed; but also, it is said, an ancient sepulchre hewn in that very spot. It is possible, but hardly possible, that a rock devoted to sepulchral purposes



GROTTO OF THE NATIVITY, BETHLEHEM.

would have been employed by Jews, whose scruples on this subject are too well known to need comment, either as an inn or a stable.

Still there remains the remarkable fact that the spot was reverenced by Christians as the birthplace of Christ two centuries before the conversion of the Empire,—before that burst of local religion which is commonly ascribed to the visit of Helena. And out of these earliest and most sacred of its recollections has grown a subordinate train of associations, which has at least the advantage of being unquestionably

grounded on fact. If the traveler follows the windings of that long subterranean gallery, he will find himself at its close in a rough chamber hewn out of the rock; here sufficiently clear to need no proof or vindication. In this cell, in all probability, lived and died the most illustrious of all the pilgrims attracted to the cave of Bethlehem—the only one of the many hermits and monks from the time of Constantine to the present day sheltered within its rocky sides, whose name has traveled beyond the limits of the Holy Land. Here, for more than thirty years, beside what he believed to be literally the cradle of the Christian faith, Jerome fasted, prayed, dreamed, and studied—here he gathered round him his devoted followers in the small communities which formed the beginnings of conventual life in Palestine—here, the fiery spirit which he had brought with him from his Dalmatian birthplace, and which had been first roused to religious fervor on the banks of the Moselle, vented itself in the flood of treatises, letters, commentaries, which he poured forth from his retirement, to terrify, exasperate, and enlighten the Western world—here also was composed the famous translation of the Scriptures which is still the "Biblia Vulgata" of the Latin Church; and here took place that pathetic scene, his last communion and death—at which all the world has been permitted to be present in the wonderful picture of Domenichino, which has represented, in colors never to be surpassed, the attenuated frame of the weak and sinking flesh—the resignation and devotion of the spirit ready for its immediate departure.

The interest of the "Holy Place" of Nazareth is of a kind different from that of Bethlehem. At the south-eastern extremity of the village stands the massive convent, so well known from the hospitable reception it affords to travelers caught in the storms of the hills of Gilboa, or attacked by the Bedouins of the plain of Esdraelon; so well known also for the impressiveness of its religious services, where wild figures in the rough drapery and the rude rope-fillet and kefyeh of the Bedouin dress, join in the responses of Christian wor-

ship, and the chants of the Latin Church are succeeded by a sermon addressed to these strange converts in their own native Arabic with all the earnestness and solemnity of the preachers of Italy. There is no church in Palestine where the religious services seem so worthy of the sacredness of the place.

But neither is there any place where traditional and local sanctities undergo so severe a shock. Elsewhere, however discreditable the conflicts of the various sects, they have yet for the most part agreed (and indeed this very agreement is the occasion of their conflicts) on the spots which they wish to venerate. But at Nazareth there are three counter-theories —each irreconcilable with the other—in relation to the special scene, which has been selected for peculiar reverence.

From the entrance of the Franciscan church a flight of steps descends to an altar, which stands within a recess, partly cased in marble, but partly showing the natural rock out of which it is formed. On a marble slab in front of this altar, worn with the kisses of many pilgrims, are the words, "Verbum caro hic factum est," and intended to mark the spot on which the Virgin stood when she received the angelic visitation. Close by is a broken pillar, which in like manner is pointed out as indicating the space occupied by the celestial visitant, who is supposed to have entered through a hole in the rocky wall forming the western front of the cave, close by the opening which now unites it with the church. The back, or eastern side of the grotto behind the altar opens by a narrow passage into a further cave, left much more nearly in its natural state, and said by an innocent tradition, which no one would care either to assert or to refute, to have been the residence of a friendly neighbor who looked after the adjacent house when Mary departed on her journey to see Elizabeth in Judæa.

To any one who knows the rivalry which prevails in the East between the Greeks and the Latins on the subject of the Holy Places, it will not be surprising that the Greeks excluded from this convent, have their own "Church of the Annuncia-

tion" at the opposite end of the town. But it would be injustice to them to suppose that this contradiction was merely the result of jealousy. In the abstinence of the Scriptural narrative from any attempt to localize the scene—from any indication whether it took place by day or night, in house or field—the Greeks may at least be pardoned for having clung to the faint shadow of tradition which lingers in the Apocryphal Gospels. In that which bears the name of St. James we are told that the first salutation of the Angel came to Mary as she was drawing water from the spring in the neighborhood of the town. That spring still remains and bears her name, and in the open meadow by its side stands the Greek Church of the Annunciation, a dull and mournful contrast in its closed doors and barbarous architecture to the solemn yet animated worship of the Franciscan convent—but undoubtedly with a better claim to be an authentic memorial of the event which they both claim as their own.

But the tradition of the Latin Church has to undergo a yet ruder trial. There is another scene of the Annunciation, not at the other extremity of the little town of Nazareth, but in another continent—not maintained by a rival and hostile sect, but fostered by the supreme head itself of the Roman Church. On the slope of the eastern Apennines, overlooking the Adriatic Gulf, stands what may be called (according to the belief of the Roman Catholic Church) the European Nazareth. Fortified as if by the bastions of a huge castle, against the approach of Saracenic pirates, a vast church, even now gorgeous with the offerings of the faithful, contains the "Santa Casa," the "Holy House," in which the Virgin lived, and (as is attested by the same inscription as that at Nazareth) received the Angel Gabriel. Every one knows the story of the House of Loretto. The devotion of one-half the world, and the ridicule of the other half, has made us all acquainted with the strange story, written in all the languages of Europe round the walls of that remarkable sanctuary: how the house of Nazareth was, in the close of the thirteenth century, conveyed

by angels, first to the heights above Fiume, at the head of the Adriatic Gulf, then to the plain, and lastly to the hill, of Loretto. But this "wondrous flitting" of the Holy House is not the feature in its history which is most present to the pilgrims who frequent it. It is regarded by them simply as an actual fragment of the Holy Land, sacred as the very spot on which the mystery of the Incarnation was announced and begun. In proportion to the sincerity and extent of this belief is the veneration which attaches to what is undoubtedly the most frequented sanctuary of Christendom. The devotion of pilgrims even on week-days exceeds anything that is seen at any of the holy places in Palestine, if we except the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Easter.

Before the dawn of day the worship begins. Whilst it is yet dark, the doors are opened—a few lights round the sacred spot break the gloom, and disclose the kneeling Capuchins, who have been here throughout the night. Two soldiers, sword in hand, take their place by the entrance of the "House," to guard against all injury. One of the hundred priests who are in daily attendance immediately begins mass at the high altar of the church, the first of a hundred and twenty that are repeated daily within its precincts. The "Santa Casa" itself is then opened and lighted, the pilgrims then flock in; and, from that hour till sunset, come and go in a perpetual stream. The "House" is thronged with kneeling or prostrate figures, the pavement round it is deeply worn with the passage of pilgrims, who, from the humblest peasant of the Abruzzi up to the King of Naples, crawl round it on their knees; the nave is filled with the bands of worshipers who, having visited the sacred spot, are retiring backwards from it, as from some royal presence.

On the Santa Casa alone depends the sacredness of the whole locality in which it stands. Loretto—whether the name is derived from the sacred grove (Lauretum) or the lady (Loreta) under whose shelter the house is believed to have descended—had no existence before the rise of this extraor-

dinary sanctuary. The long street with its venders of rosaries, the palace of the governor, the strong walls built by Pope Sixtus IV., are all mere appendages to the humble edifice which stands within the Church. The "Santa Casa" is spoken of by them as a living person, a corporation on which the whole city depends, to which the whole property far and near over the rich plain which lies spread beneath it belongs forever.

No one who has ever witnessed the devotion of the Italian people on this singular spot, can wish to speak lightly of the feelings which it inspires. But a dispassionate statement of the real facts of the case may not be without use. Into the general question of the story we need not enter here. It has been ably proved elsewhere, first, that of all the pilgrims who record their visit to Nazareth from the fourth to the sixteenth century, not one alludes to any house of Joseph as standing there, or as having stood there, within human memory or record; secondly, that the records of Italy contain no mention of the House till the fifteenth century; thirdly, that the representation of the story as it now stands, with the double or triple transplantation of the sanctuary, occurs first in a bull of Leo X. in the year 1518. But it is the object of these remarks simply to confront the House as it stands at Loretto with the House as it appears at Nazareth. It has been already said that each professes to contain the exact spot of the angelic visitation, to be the scene of a single event which can only have happened in one; each claims to be the very House of the Annunciation, and bases its claim to sanctity on that especial ground. But this is not all: even should either consent to surrender something of this peculiar sacredness, yet no one can visit both sanctuaries without perceiving that by no possibility can one be amalgamated with the other. The House at Loretto is an edifice of thirty-six feet by seventeen: its walls, though externally cased in marble, can be seen in their original state from the inside, and these appear to be of a dark red polished stone. The west wall has one square win-



VALE AND CITY OF NAZARETH.

dow, through which it is said the angel flew; the east wall contains a rude chimney, in front of which is a mass of cemented stone, said to be the altar on which St. Peter said mass, when the apostles, after the ascension, turned the house into a church. On the north side is (or rather was) a door, now walled up. The monks of Loretto and of Nazareth have but a dim knowledge of the sacred localities of each other. Still, the monks of Nazareth could not be altogether ignorant of the mighty sanctuary which, under the highest authorities of their Church, professes to have once rested on the ground they now occupy. They show, therefore, to any traveler who takes the pains to inquire, the space on which the Holy House stood before its flight. That space is a vestibule immediately in front of the sacred grotto; and an attempt is made to unite the two localities by supposing that there were openings from the house into the grotto. Without laying any stress on the obvious variation of measurements, the position of the grotto is, and must always have been, absolutely incompatible with any such adjacent building as that at Loretto. Whichever way the house is supposed to abut on the rock, it is obvious that such a house as has been described, would have closed up, with blank walls, the very passages by which alone the communication could be effected. And it may be added, that although there is no traditional masonry of the Santa Casa left at Nazareth, there is the traditional masonry close by of the so-called workshop of Joseph of an entirely different character. Whilst the former is of a kind wholly unlike anything in Palestine, the latter is, as might be expected, of the natural gray limestone of the country, of which in all times, no doubt, the houses of Nazareth were built.

It may have seemed superfluous labor to have attempted any detailed refutation of the most incredible of Ecclesiastical legends. But Loretto is so emphatically the "Holy Place" of one large branch of Christendom—its claim has been so strongly maintained by French and Italian writers of our own times—and is, moreover, so deeply connected with the

alleged authority of the Papal See—that an interest attaches to it far beyond its intrinsic importance. No facts are insignificant which bring to an issue the general value of local religion—or the assumption of any particular Church to the direct conscience of the world—or the amount of liberty within such a Church left on questions which concern the faith and practice of thousands of its members.

But the legend is also curious as an illustration of the history of "Holy Places" generally. It is difficult to say how it originated—or what led to the special selection of the Adriatic Gulf as the scene of such a fable; yet, generally speaking, the explanation is easy and instructive. Nazareth was taken by Sultan Khalil in 1291, when he stormed the last refuge of the Crusaders in the neighboring city of Acre. From that time, not Nazareth only, but the whole of Palestine, was closed to the devotions of Europe. The Crusaders were expelled from Asia and in Europe the spirit of the Crusades was extinct. But the natural longing to see the scenes of the events of the Sacred History—the superstitious craving to win for prayer the favor of consecrated localities—did not expire with the Crusades. Can we wonder that, under such circumstances, there should have arisen the feeling, the desire, the belief, that if Mahomet could not go to the mountain, the mountain must come to Mahomet? The House of Loretto is the petrifaction, so to speak, of the "Last sigh of the Crusades;" suggested possibly by the Holy House of St. Francis at Assisi, then first acquiring its European celebrity. It is indeed not a matter of conjecture that in Italy—the country where the passionate temperament of the people would most need such stimulants—persons in this state of mind did actually endeavor, so far as circumstances permitted, to reproduce the scenes of Palestine within their own immediate neighborhood. One such is the Campo Santo of Pisa—"the Holy Field," as this is "the Holy House"—literally a cargo of sacred earth from the Valley of Hinnom, carried, as is well known, not on the wings of angels, but in the ships of the

Pisan Crusaders. Another example is the remarkable Church of St. Stephen's, at Bologna, within whose walls are crowded together various chapels and courts, representing not only, as in the actual Church of the Sepulchre, the several scenes of the Crucifixion, but the Trial and Passion also; and which is entitled, in a long inscription affixed to its cloister, the "Sancta Sanctorum;" nay, literally "the *Jerusalem*" of Italy. A third still more curious instance may be seen at Varallo, in the kingdom of Piedmont. Bernardino Caimo, returning from a pilgrimage to Palestine at the close of the fifteenth century, resolved to select the spot in Lombardy most resembling the Holy Land, in order to give his countrymen the advantage of praying at the Holy Place without undergoing the privations which he had suffered himself. Accordingly, in one of the beautiful valleys leading down from the roots of Monte Rosa, he chose (it must be confessed that the resemblance is of the slightest kind) three hills, which should represent respectively Tabor, Olivet, and Calvary; and two mountain-streams, which should in like manner personate the Kedron and Jordan. Of these the central hill, Calvary, became the "Holy Place" of Lombardy. It was frequented by S. Carlo Borromeo; under his auspices the whole mountain was studded with chapels, in which the scenes of the Passion are represented in waxen figures of the size of life; and the whole country round now sends its peasants by thousands as pilgrims to the sacred spot. We have only to suppose these feelings existing as they naturally would exist in a more fervid state two centuries earlier, when the loss of Palestine was more keenly felt—when the capture of Nazareth especially was fresh in every one's mind—and we can easily imagine that the same tendency, which by deliberate purpose produced a second Jerusalem at Bologna and a second Palestine at Varallo, would, on the secluded shores of the Adriatic, by some peasant's dream, or the return of some Croatian chief from the last Crusade, or the story of some Eastern voyager landing on their coasts, produce a second Nazareth at Fiume and

Loretto. What, in a more poetical and ignorant age was in the case of the Holy House ascribed to the hands of angels, was actually intended by Sixtus V. to have been literally accomplished in the case of the Holy Sepulchre by a treaty with the Sublime Porte for transferring it bodily to Rome, so that Italy might then have the glory of possessing the actual sites of the conception, the birth, and the burial of our Saviour.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HOLY PLACES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—(CONTINUED.)

Uniformity of Tradition Regarding the Holy Places—Growth of Legends in Greece and Rome—Different in Jerusalem—The Church of the Ascension—Its Antiquity—The Church Built by Helena—The Cave at Bethlehem—The Mount of Olives—Church of the Virgin—Garden of Gethsemane—Mount Zion—Mosque of the Tomb of David—The Cœnaculum—The Site of the Holy Sepulchre—Hadrian's Temple—Tomb of Adam—The Wall of Herod—Golgotha—Chapel of the "Invention of the Cross"—Capernaum—The Two Canas—Bethesda—The Travels of St. Paul—The Fastnesses of Asia Minor—The Holy Places of Greece—The Character of New Testament Geography.

THE Holy Places which cluster within and around the walls of Jerusalem have been shown, age after age, with singular uniformity. Here and there a tradition has been misplaced by accident, or transposed for convenience, or suppressed in fear of ridicule, or, it may be, from sincere doubts. But, on the whole, what was shown to Maundeville in the fourteenth century, was with some few omissions shown to Maundrell in the seventeeth, and what Maundrell has carefully described with the dry humor peculiar to his age, may still be verified at the present time. Such localities are interesting as relics of the period when for the first and only time Palestine became a European province—as the scenes, if one may so call them, of some of the most celebrated works of European art—as the fountain heads of some of the most extensive of European superstitions. No thoughtful traveler can see without at least a passing emotion the various points in the Via Dolorosa, which have been repeated again and again in pictures and in calvaries, amidst the blaze of gorgeous colors, and on the sides of romantic



VIA DOLOROSA—JERUSALEM WITH THE ARCH OF ECCE HOMO.
The way by which Christ was led to crucifixion.

hills in France and Italy; the spot where Veronica is said to have received the sacred cloth, for which Lucca, Turin, and Rome contend—the threshold where is believed to have stood the Scala Santa, worn by the ceaseless toil of Roman pilgrims in front of St. John Lateran. There is, however, one feature common to all these lesser sanctities, which illustrates the general remarks already made on the scenery of Palestine. There are some countries, such as Greece, whose natural features—some cities, such as Rome, whose vast ruins—lend themselves with extraordinary facility to the growth of legends. The stalactite figures of the Corycian cave at once explain the origin of the nymphs who are said to have dwelt there. The deserted halls, the subterranean houses, the endless catacombs of Rome, afford an ample field for the localization of the numerous persons and events with which the early history of the Roman Church abounds. But in Jerusalem it is not so. The featureless rocks without the walls, the mere dust and ashes within, at once repel the attempt to amalgamate them with the fables which, by the very fact of their slight and almost imperceptible connection with the spots in question, betray their foreign parentage. A fragment of old sculpture lying at a house door is sufficient to mark the abode of Veronica; a broken column, separated from its companions in a colonnade in the next street, is pointed out as that to which the decree of Pilate was affixed, or on which the cock crew; a faint line on the surface of a rock is the mark of the girdle which the virgin dropped to convince Thomas. There is no attempt at fraud, or even at probability; nothing seems to have been too slight, too modern, for the tradition to lay hold of it. Criticism and belief are alike disarmed by the child-like, almost playful spirit, in which the early pilgrims and crusaders must have gone to and fro, seeking for places here and there, in which to localize the dreams of their own imaginations.

From these—the mere sport and exuberance of monastic tradition—we pass to the more important of the sacred localities of Jerusalem.

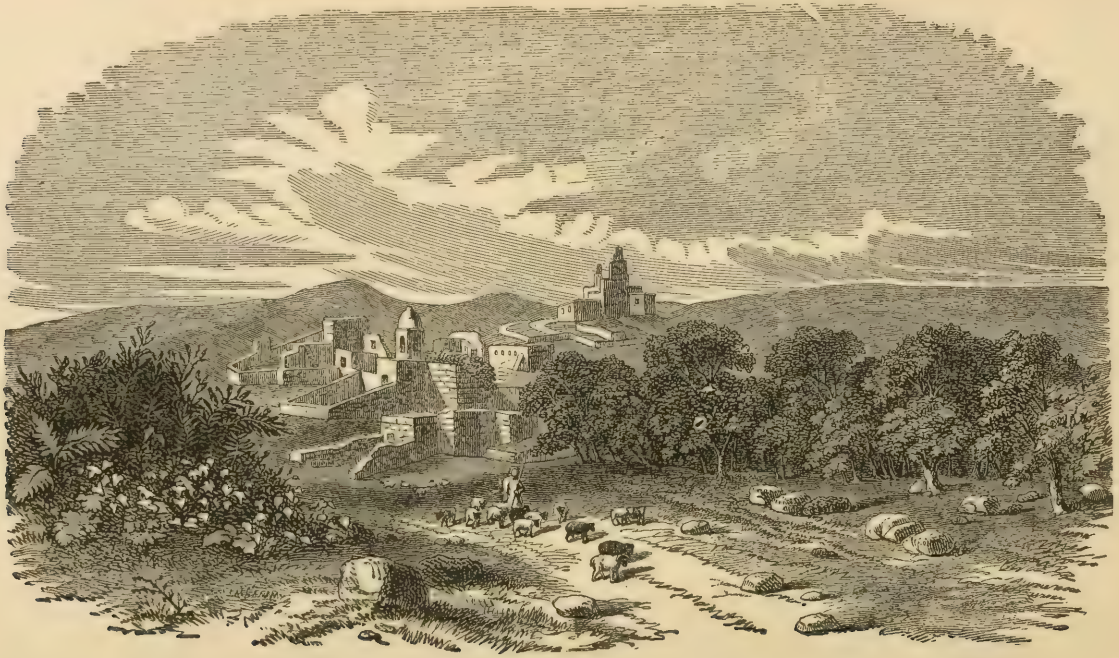
The present edifice of the Church of the Ascension on the top of Olivet has no claims to antiquity. It is a small octagon chapel within the court of a mosque, the minaret of which is ascended by every traveler for the sake of its celebrated view over Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. Within the chapel is the rock which has been pointed out to pilgrims, at least since the seventh century, as imprinted with the footstep of our Saviour. There is no spot to which the remarks just made may be more joyfully applied respecting the slightness of ground on which these lesser traditions rest. It would be painful to witness any mark of fraud, or even any trick of nature, in connection with an event like that which this rock professes to commemorate. Nothing but deep repulsion would now be excited were there, for example, any such mark as that which is shown in the Chapel of Domine Quo Vadis at Rome, or of St. Radegonde at Poitiers, where a well-defined foot-mark in the stone is supposed to indicate the spot where, in those two places, our Saviour appeared to St. Peter and St. Radegonde. Here there is nothing but a simple cavity in the rock, with no more resemblance to a human foot than to anything else. It must have been sought and selected in default of anything better; it could never either have been invented or have suggested the connection.

The site is probably ancient. This doubtless is "the top of the hill" on which Helena built one of the only two churches which Eusebius ascribes to her (the other being, as we have seen, at Bethlehem)—the church whose glittering cross first caught the eye of the pilgrims who approached Jerusalem from the south and west. At the same time there is one circumstance on which Eusebius lays great stress, and which throws a new light on the special object for which this church was erected. That object, he tells us, as at Bethlehem, was a cave—a cave, as he further adds, in which "a true tradition maintains that our Lord had initiated his disciples in his secret mysteries" before the ascension, and to which, on that account, pilgrimages were in his time made from all parts of

MOUNT OF OLIVES.

the Empire. It was to honor this cave, which Constantine himself also adorned, that Helena built a church on the summit of the mountain, in memory of the Ascension. The cave to which Eusebius refers must almost certainly be the same as that singular catacomb, a short distance below the third summit of Olivet, commonly called the Tombs of the Prophets, and first distinctly noticed by Arculf in the seventh century, to whom were shown within it "four stone tables, where our Lord and the Apostles sate." In the next century the same "four tables of His Supper," were shown again to Bernard the Wise, who speaks of a church being erected there to commemorate the Betrayal. From that period it remained unnoticed till attention was again called to it by the travelers of the seventeenth century, in whose time it had assumed its present name, which it has borne ever since.

It is clear from the language of Eusebius that the traditional spot which Helena meant to honor was not the scene of the Ascension itself, but the scene of the conversations before the Ascension, and the cave in which they were believed to have occurred. Had this been clearly perceived, much useless controversy might have been spared. There is in fact no proof from Eusebius that any tradition pointed out the scene of the Ascension. Here was (as usual) the tradition of the *cave*, and nothing besides. Helena fixed upon the site of her church, partly from its commanding position, partly from its vicinity to the cave. The contradiction of the present spot to the words of St. Luke, and its still more palpable contradiction to the whole character of the scene of the Ascension, has been already pointed out. Even if the Evangelist had been less explicit in stating that He led them out "as far as Bethany" —the secluded hills which overhang that village on the eastern slope of Olivet, are evidently as appropriate to the whole tenor of the narrative as the startling, the almost offensive publicity of the traditional spot in the full view of the whole city of Jerusalem is wholly inappropriate, and (in the absence, as it now appears, of even traditional support) wholly untenable.



BETHANY.

There are few travelers whose attention has not been arrested, even in the first flush of the ascent of Mount Olivet, by the sight of a venerable chapel, approached by a flight of steps, which lead from the rocky roots of Olivet, on which it stands, and entered by yet again another and deeper descent, under the low-browed arches of a gothic roof, producing on a smaller scale the same impression of awful gloom that is so remarkable in the subterranean Church of Assisi. This is the traditional burial-place of the Virgin. "You must know," says Maundeville, "that this church is very low in the earth, and a part is quite within the earth. But I imagine that it was not founded so; but since Jerusalem has been so often destroyed, and the walls broken down, and leveled with the valley, and that they have been so filled again and the ground raised, for that reason the church is so low in the earth. Nevertheless, men say there commonly, that the earth hath been so ever since the time that our Lady was buried there, and men also say there that it grows and increases every day without doubt." Its history is comparatively recent. It is not mentioned by Jerome amongst the sacred places visited by Paula. And, if on such matters the authority of Councils is supposed to have any weight, the tomb of the Virgin ought to be found, not at Jerusalem, but at Ephesus, where it was placed by the Third Council. But even the authority of a General Council has been unable to hold its ground against the later legend, which placed her death and burial at Jerusalem. Even the Greek peasants of Ephesus, though still pointing to the ruined edifice on the hights of Coressus, as the tomb of the Panaghia, have been taught to consider it the tomb of another Panaghia than the "Theotocos," in whom their great Council exulted. And Greeks and Latins unite in contending for the possession of the rocky sepulchre at the foot of Olivet—the scene, in the belief of both Churches, of that "Assumption" which, in our later ages, has passed from the region of poetry and devotion into a sober and literal doctrine.

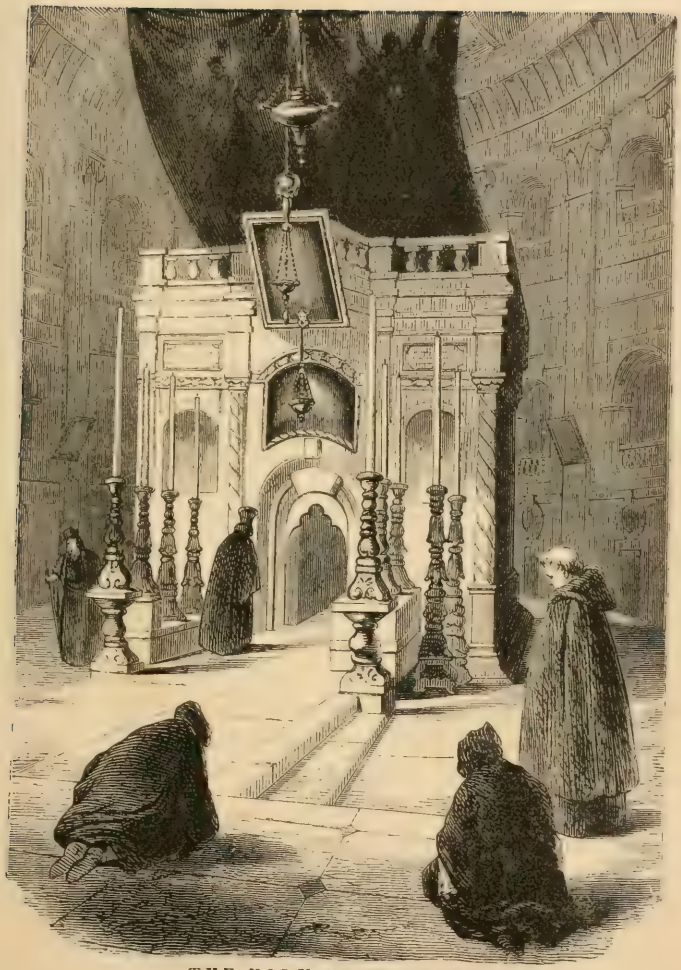
Close beside the Church of the Virgin is a spot which, as

it is omitted in Abbé Michon's catalogue of Holy places, might perhaps have been passed over; yet a few words, and perhaps the fewer the better, must be devoted to the garden of Gethsemane. That the tradition reaches back to the age of Constantine is certain. How far it agrees with the slight indications of its position in the Gospel narrative will be judged by the impressions of each individual traveler. Some will think it too public; others will see an argument in its favor from its close proximity to the brook Kedron; none, probably, will be disposed to receive the traditional sites which surround it, the grotto of the Agony, the rocky bank of the three Apostles, the "terra damnata" of the Betrayal. But, in spite of all the doubts that can be raised against their antiquity or the genuineness of their site, the eight aged olive-trees, if only by their manifest difference from all others on the mountain, have always struck even the most indifferent observers. They are now indeed less striking in the modern garden enclosure built round them by the Franciscan monks, than when they stood free and unprotected on the rough hill-side; but they will remain, so long as their already protracted life is spared, the most venerable of their race on the surface of the earth; their gnarled trunks and scanty foliage will always be regarded as the most affecting of the sacred memorials in or about Jerusalem; the most nearly approaching to the everlasting hills themselves in the force with which they carry us back to the events of the Gospel History.

On the brow of the hill now called Mount Zion, a conspicuous minaret is pointed out from a distance to the traveler approaching Jerusalem from the south, as marking the Mosque of the Tomb of David. Within the precincts of that mosque is a vaulted gothic chamber, which contains within its four walls a greater confluence of traditions than any other place of like dimensions in Palestine. It is startling to hear that this is the scene of the Last Supper, of the meeting after the Resurrection, of the miracle of Pentecost, of the residence and death of the Virgin, of the burial of Stephen. If one

might hazard a conjecture respecting the cause of such a concentration of traditions, some of them dating as far back as the fourth century, it would be this. We know from Cyril and Epiphanius that a building existed on this spot, claiming to be the only edifice which had survived the overthrow of the city by Titus. This building of unknown origin would naturally serve as an appropriate receptacle for all recollections which could not otherwise be attached to any fixed locality. There is one circumstance which, if proved, would be fatal to the claims of the "Cœnaculum." It stands above the vault of the traditional Tomb of David. It is difficult to trace back to its origin this belief, which, although entertained by Christians, Jews, and Mussulmans alike, yet has given the place a special sanctity only in the eyes of the last. Possibly it may have been occasioned by a misunderstanding of St. Peter's words, "His sepulchre is *with us* (ἐν ἡμῖν) until this day;" according to which, it might have been thought that David's Tomb was literally in the midst of the Pentecostal Assembly, that is, in the chamber now shown as the Cœnaculum. At any rate, it is impossible to support both claims at once. No residence, at the time of the Christian era, could ever have stood within the precincts of the Royal Sepulchre.

We now approach the most sacred of all the Holy Places; in comparison of which, if genuine, all the rest sink into insignificance; the interest of which, even if not genuine, stands absolutely alone in the world. I shall not attempt to unravel the tangled controversy of the identity of the Holy Sepulchre. Everything which can be said against that identity will be found in the Biblical Researches of Dr. Robinson—everything which can be said in its favor will be found in the Holy City of Mr. Williams, including, as it does, the able discussion on the architectural history of the church by Professor Willis. It is enough to state that the argument mainly turns on the solution of two questions, one historical, the other topographical. The historical question rests on the value of the tradition that the spot was marked before the time of Constantine

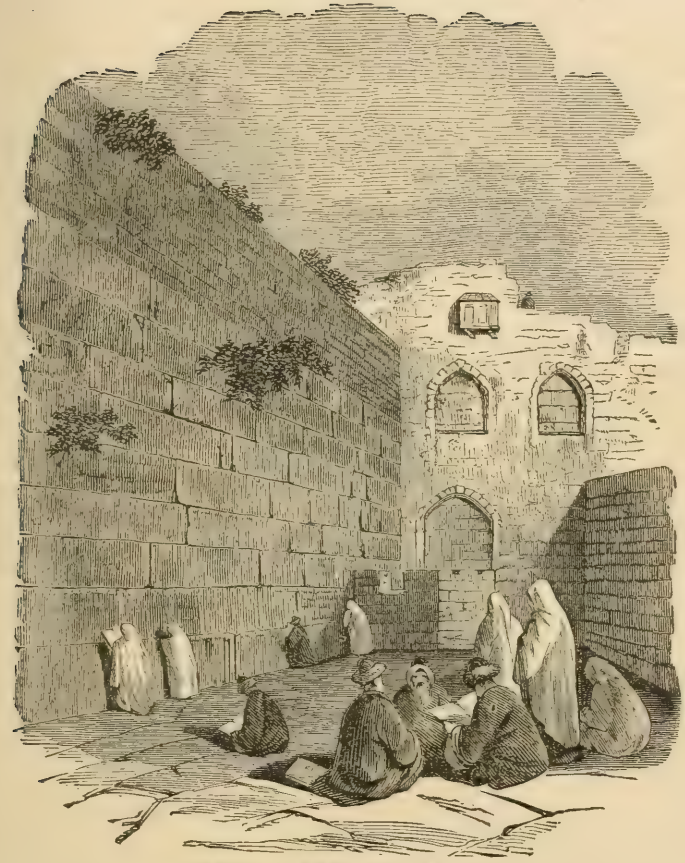


THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

by a temple or statue of Venus, which the Emperor Hadrian had erected in order to pollute a spot already in his time regarded as sacred by the Christians. The topographical question is, whether the present site can be proved to have stood without the walls of Jerusalem at the time of the Crucifixion. On the historical question the advocates of the identity of the Sepulchre never have fairly met the difficulty, that it is hardly conceivable that Hadrian could have had any motive in such a purpose, when his whole object in establishing his new city of Ælia was to insult not the Christians, but the Jews, from whom, in Palestine at that time, the Christians were emphatically divided. And it is at least curious that to the corresponding tradition respecting Hadrian's temple of Adonis at Bethlehem, there is no allusion whatever by Justin, or by Origen, though speaking of the very cave in which the Pagan temple is said to have been erected, and within a century of the time of its erection. In the topographical question, on the other hand, the opponents of the identity of the Sepulchre have never done justice to the argument first clearly stated in England by Lord Nugent, and pointedly brought out by Professor Willis, which is derived from the so-called tombs of Joseph and Nicodemus. Underneath the western galleries of the church, behind the Holy Sepulchre, are two excavations in the face of the rock, forming an ancient Jewish Sepulchre as clearly as any that can be seen in the Valley of Hinnom or in the Tombs of the Kings. That they should have been so long overlooked both by the advocates and opponents of the identity of the Holy Sepulchre, can only be accounted for by the perverse dullness of the conventual guides of the church, who point the attention of travelers and pilgrims, not to those sepulchres, but to two graves sunk in the floor in front of them—possibly, like similar excavations in the rocky floors at Petra, of ancient origin—possibly, however, as Dr. Schulz suggests, dug at a later time to represent the graves, when the real object of the ancient sepulchres had ceased to be intelligible—just as the tombs of some Mussul-

man saints are fictitious tombs erected over the rude sepulchres hewn in the rock beneath. The traditional names of Joseph and Nicodemus are of course valueless. But the existence of these sepulchres proves almost to a certainty that at some period the site of the present church must have been outside the walls of the city, and lends considerable probability to the belief that the rocky excavation, which perhaps exists in part still, and certainly once existed entire, within the marble casing of the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, was at any rate a really ancient tomb, and not, as is often rashly asserted, a modern structure intended to imitate it. One further point deserves consideration. The tradition that Adam or Adam's skull was buried in Golgotha seems anterior to the tradition of the Sepulchre itself. It was suggested by Dr. Clarke that the curious cavity still shown as the site of that burial-place may have been the center of the whole story. It is, at any rate, remarkable that this should have been the only traditional spot in connection with the Crucifixion pointed out in the third century.

Farther than this in our present state of knowledge no merely topographical consideration can bring us. Even though these tombs prove the site to have been outside some wall, they do not prove that wall to have been the wall of Herod: it may have been the earlier wall of the ancient monarchy; and, even though it be outside the wall of Herod, this only proves the possibility—not even the probability—of its identity with the scene of the Crucifixion. And the question whether the wall of Herod really ran so as just to exclude or just to include the present site, must depend for its solution on such excavations under the accumulated ruins of ages as are now impossible, but will doubtless in some future day clear up the topography of ancient Jerusalem, as they have in the analogous case of Rome, cleared up beyond all previous expectation, the topography of the Forum. But, granting to the full the doubts which must always hang over the highest claims of the Church of the Sepulchre, no thoughtful man



JEWS' PLACE OF WAILING.

can look unmoved on what has, from the time of Constantine, been revered by the larger part of the Christian world as the scene of the greatest events of the world's history, and has itself in time become, for that reason, the center of a second cycle of events of incomparably less magnitude, indeed, but yet of an interest in the highest degree romantic. It may be too much to expect that inquiring travelers, who see the necessary uncertainty of the whole tradition, should be able to partake of those ardent feelings which even a skeptical observer like Dr. Clarke acknowledges, in that striking passage which describes the entrance of himself and his companions into the Chapel of the Sepulchre. But its later associations may be felt by every student of history without fear of superstition or irreverence.

Look at it as its site was first fixed by Constantine and his mother. Whether Golgotha were here or far away, there is no question that we can still trace the sweep of the rocky hill, in the face of which the Sepulchre stood, as they first beheld it. For if the rough limestone be disputed, which some maintain can still be felt in the interior of the Chapel of the Sepulchre, there can be no doubt of the rock which contains the "tombs of Joseph and Nicodemus;" none of that which in the "prison" and in the "entombment of Adam's head" marks the foot of the cliff of the present Golgotha; or of that which is seen at its summit in the so-called fissure of the "rocks rent by the earthquake;" none, lastly, of that through which a long descent conducts the pilgrim to the subterraneous chapel of the "Invention of the Cross." In all these places enough can be seen to show what the natural features of the places must have been before the "ingenious rock" had been "violated by the marble" of Constantine; enough to show that the church is at least built on the native hills of the old Jerusalem."

A great deal of obscurity exists regarding places of great interest in the New Testament. It would appear that special care has been taken by the Almighty that we should not fall



ALL THAT REMAINS OF CAPERNAUM.

into the peril of offering a kind of idolatry to the places where such great events occurred, and that in pure kindness to us, many sacred sites are now known only by conjecture. Among these may be mentioned the place where John the Baptist died at the hands of Herod, and the places "Enon near Salim" and "Bethabara beyond Jordan" where he loved to baptize his followers. Capernaum was, beyond question, on the north-western shore of the Sea of Galilee, but it is not yet quite moved from the field of controversy at just what point it was, although it is claimed as almost certain by several travelers, and on a previous page of this work will be found an engraving of "all the remains of Capernaum." Still scholars know that still a vexed controversy still goes on, and the solution is not likely to be reached yet. So too regarding Cana, where Jesus turned the water into wine. There are two places, both Canas, which contend for this honor. The geography of Bethsaida is not yet placed beyond question, and it would be possible to fill a large work with the various arguments which have been urged by disputants in the field of New Testament geography alone. Yet it is an unprofitable field, and one on which we will not essay to enter.

The publication of a work so generally known as Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St. Paul, renders it inexpedient to attempt to trace the journeyings of that great man from his birth-place in Tarsus to his dungeon in Rome, where he passed the last months of his busy and godly career. A whole volume would be required to do justice to the geography of the book of Acts. The scenery lies very largely outside of Palestine and the countries which, in a certain well understood sense, we call Biblical. We are taken through the wild and mountainous fastnesses of Asia Minor, into nearly all those cities which were then so opulent, and now so desolate, Smyrna, being almost the only one which remains of them all; we are taken across the Ægean to the wonder land of Greece; we see its classic Athens, its opulent and voluptuous Corinth, and many other of its well-known cities, and so even in the



POOL OF BETHESDA.

This was a Pool in Jerusalem, which, at certain seasons, had its waters troubled by an angel, and the first person stepping in after that troubling, was healed of whatever disease he had. And here Christ performed a miraculous cure on a man who had been waiting thirty-eight years.

New Testament Greece, classic Greece, becomes better known to the mass of our readers, than even through the pages of the Grecian authors themselves.

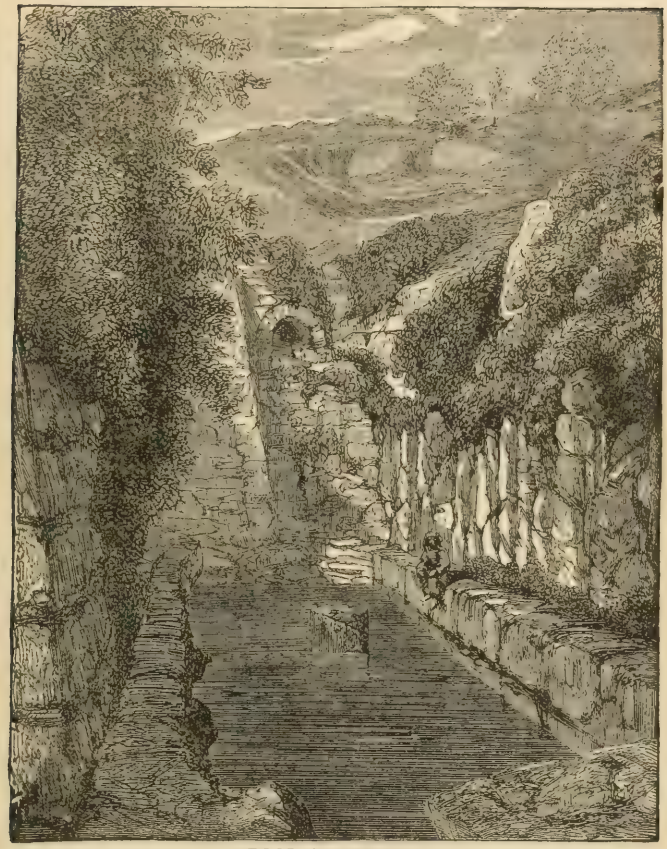
But not Greece alone, but Italy enters into the story of the great Apostle's journeyings. Yet it would be vain to regard Italy as a Biblical land; and inasmuch as the learned Conybeare and Howson have done so exhaustively what they have attempted, and inasmuch as publishers have vied in making their work the possession of all readers, it would be vain to attempt to follow them, in a work whose main purpose has been to elucidate the geography of the Old Testament. The story of St. Paul's wonderful voyage has also been often told. Step by step he has been followed; and even Crete and Malta have been carefully explored for the purpose of learning all the details which can throw light upon his journey to Rome.

And it is not too much to say, perhaps, that Rome itself owes as much to its Biblical as to its secularly classical interest. Few go to Rome who do not explore quite as inquisitively the palace of the Cæsars as they do the views of the Forum; and even the beautiful Arch of Titus owes as much of its charm to the sculptured representation of the conquering hero leading away the Jews from Jerusalem, with the sacred vessels from the temple in their hands, as it does to the record of other triumphs. The Catacombs which wind their dark way beneath the city, would be much more highly and generally enjoyed, were they accessible, than are the proudest monuments of heathen art which have come down to us; and all the dim and faded stories of the early martyrs of Rome have conferred on the Eternal City a renown which, in the eyes of most readers and travelers, is far finer than the proudest legends of the classic era. It were greatly to be desired that a volume be prepared which should place our great reading public in possession of the monuments of what may be called the Christian Rome of Antiquity; such a work would show us that that beautiful city derives a large part of its great interest from its connection with the Christian Faith.



RUINS OF THE PALACE OF THE CESARS.

Aside from the book of Acts and the story of our Lord, there remains but little in the New Testament which requires geographical elucidation. The book grows more and more spiritual from first to last, and we who wish and demand to know what and where were Bethlehem and Nazareth, grow more and more indifferent to places as we advance. The places to which those epistles were directed do indeed awaken a little curiosity, but the story of St. Paul's life and wanderings generally places us in possession of that slight geographical knowledge which is needed to understand his letters. The old Jerusalem gives place to the New Jerusalem; and although its geography is so fully delineated in the Apocalypse of St. John, yet it requires no aid from our maps of what we call Holy Land. But from Eden to Patmos, there is no place where we imperatively require the aid of human travel and observation but it has been given us. Where the Bible is its own interpreter, and needs only spiritual discernment to read it aright, there geography does little or nothing for the reader; but where the story needs to be read by the light of travel and research, in order that the spiritual side may be apprehended, there the good Father has not failed us, but has given us all the light we need.



POOL OF SILOAM.

Lying just under the overshadowing walls of Jerusalem. The eyes of a man who was born blind, having been anointed with clay by our Lord, he was sent to this place to wash, in order that he might receive his sight.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PALESTINE, ITS ASPECT AND SITUATION.

BY A. P. STANLEY, DEAN OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

The Highlands of Syria—Lebanon—The Four Rivers of Palestine—The Orontes—The Litany—The Barada—The Jordan—Physical Conformation of Palestine—Seclusion from the rest of the Ancient World—Smallness and Narrow Territory—Central Situation—A Land of Ruins.

BETWEEN the great plains of Assyria and the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, a high mountain tract is interposed, reaching from the Bay of Issus to the Desert of Arabia. Of this the northern part, which consists of the ranges known in ancient geography under the names of Amanus and Casius, and which includes rather more than half the tract in question, is not within the limits of the Holy Land; and, though belonging to the same general elevation, is distinguished from the southern division by strongly marked peculiarities, and only enters into the sacred history at a later time, when its connection with any local scenes was too slight to be worth dwelling upon in detail. It is with the southern division that we are now concerned.

The range divides itself twice over into two parallel chains. There is first, the main chain of Lebanon, separated by the broad valley commonly called Cœle-Syria; the western mountain reaching its highest termination in the northern point of Lebanon; the eastern, in the southern point of Hermon. This last point—itself the loftiest summit of the whole range—again breaks into two ranges, of which the western, with the exception of one broad depression, extends as far as the

Desert of Sinai; the eastern, as far as the mountains of Arabia Petræa. From this chain, flow four rivers of unequal magnitude, on which, at different times, have sprung up the four ruling powers of that portion of Asia. Lebanon is, in this respect, a likeness of that primeval paradise to which its local traditions have always endeavored to attach themselves. The northern river, rising from the fork of the two ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, and forming the channel of life and civilization in that northern division of which we have just spoken, is the Orontes,—the river of the Greek kingdom of Antioch and Seleucia. The western, is the Litâny, rising from the same water-shed between the two ranges, near Baalbec, and falling into the Mediterranean, close to Tyre,—the river of Phœnicia. The eastern, rising from Anti-Lebanon and joined by one or two lesser streams, is the modern Barada, the Abana or Pharpar of the Old Testament —the river of the Syrian kingdom of Damascus. The kingdoms which have risen in the neighborhood or on the banks of these rivers, have flourished not simultaneously, but successively. The northern kingdom was the latest, and is only brought into connection with the Sacred History, as being that from which the "Kings of the North" made their descent upon Palestine, and in which were afterwards founded the first Gentile churches. It was, as it were, the halting-place of Christianity, before it finally left its Asiatic home—beyond the limits of the Holy Land, yet not in another country or climate; naturally resting on the banks of the Orontes, on the way from the valley of the Jordan, before (to use the Roman poet's expression in another and better sense) it joined "the flow of the Orontes into the Tiber." The eastern kingdom of Damascus on one side, the western kingdom of Phœnicia on the other, claim a nearer connection with the history of the chosen people from first to last; the one, as the great opening of communication with the distant eastern deserts, the other with the Mediterranean coasts. The fourth and southern river, which rises at the point where

Hermon splits into its two parallel ranges, is the river of Palestine—the Jordan.

The Jordan, with its manifold peculiarities, must be reserved for the time when we come to speak of it in detail. Yet it must be remembered throughout, that this river, the artery of the whole country, is unique on the surface of the globe. The ranges of the Lebanon are remarkable; the courses of the Orontes, the Leontes, and the Barada, are curious; but the deep depression of the Jordan has absolutely no parallel. No other valley in the world presents such extraordinary physical features, none has been the subject of such various theories as to its origin and character. How far this strange conformation of the Holy Land has had any extensive influence on its history may be doubtful. But it is, perhaps, worth observing at the outset, that we are in a country, of which the geography and the history each claims to be singular of its kind:—the history, by its own records, unconscious, if one may so say, of the physical peculiarity; the geography, by the discoveries of modern science, wholly without regard, perhaps even indifferent or hostile, to the claims of the history. Such a coincidence may be accidental; but, at least, it serves to awaken the curiosity, and strike the imagination; at least, it lends dignity to the country, where the earth and the man are thus alike objects of wonder and investigation.

It is around and along this deep fissure that the hills of western and eastern Palestine spring up, forming the link between the high group of Lebanon on the north, and the high group of Sinai on the south; forming the mountain-bridge, or isthmus, between the ocean of the Assyrian Desert, and the ocean (as it seemed to the ancient world) of the Mediterranean, or "Great Sea" on the west. On the one side of the Jordan these hills present a mass of green pastures and forests melting away, on the east into the red plains of Haurân. On the other side they form a mass of gray rock rising above the yellow desert on the south, bounded on the west by the

long, green strip of the maritime plain; cut asunder on the north by the rich plain of Esdraelon; rising again beyond Esdraelon into the wild scenery of mountain and forest in the roots of Lebanon.

Each of these divisions has a name, a character, and, to a certain extent, a history of its own, which will best appear as we proceed. But there are features more or less common to the whole country, especially to that portion of it which has been the chief seat of the national life; and these, so far as they illustrate the general history, must be now considered.

"The Vine" was "brought out of Egypt;" what was the land in which God "prepared room before it, and caused it to take deep root," and "cover the 'mountains' with its shadow?"

The peculiar characteristic of the Israelite people, whether as contemplated from their own sacred records, or as viewed by their Gentile neighbors, was that they were a nation secluded, set apart, from the rest of the world; "haters," it was said, "of the human race," and hated by it in return. Is there anything in the physical structure and situation of their country which agrees with this peculiarity? Look at its boundaries. The most important in this respect will be that on the east. For in that early time, when Palestine first fell to the lot of the chosen people, the East was still the world. The great empires which rose on the plains of Mesopotamia, the cities of the Euphrates and the Tigris, were literally then, what Babylon is metaphorically in the Apocalypse, the rulers and corrupters of all the kingdoms of the earth. Between these great empires and the people of Israel, two obstacles were interposed. The first was the eastern desert, which formed a barrier in front even of the outposts of Israel—the nomadic tribes on the east of the Jordan; the second, the vast fissure of the Jordan valley, which must always have acted as a deep trench within the exterior rampart of the desert and the eastern hills of the Trans-Jordanic tribes.

Next to the Assyrian empire in strength and power, supe-

rior to it in arts and civilization, was Egypt. What was there on the southern boundary of Palestine, to secure that "the Egyptians whom they saw on the shores of the Red Sea, they should see no more again?" Up to the very frontier of their own land stretched that "great and terrible wilderness," which rolled like a sea between the valley of the Nile and the valley of the Jordan. And this wilderness itself—the platform of the Tih—could be only reached on its eastern side by the tremendous pass of Akaba at the southern, and of Sâfeh at the northern end of the Arabah. On these, the two most important frontiers, the separation was most complete.

The two accessible sides were the west and the north. But the west was only accessible by sea, and when Israel first settled in Palestine, the Mediterranean was not yet the thoroughfare—it was rather the boundary and the terror of the eastern nations. It is true that from the north-western coast of Syria, the Phœnician cities sent forth their fleets. But they were the exception of the world, the discoverers, the first explorers of the unknown depths,—and in their enterprises Israel never joined. In strong contrast, too, with the coasts of Europe, and especially of Greece, Palestine has no indentations, no winding creeks, no deep havens, such as in ancient, even more than in modern times, were necessary for the invitation and protection of commercial enterprise. One long line, broken only by the bay of Acre, containing only three bad harbors, Joppa, Acre, and Caipha—and the last unknown in ancient times—is the inhospitable front that Palestine opposed to the western world. On the northern frontier the ranges of Lebanon formed two not insignificant ramparts. But the gate between them was open, and through the long valley of Cœle-Syria, the hosts of Syrian and Assyrian conquerors accordingly poured. These were the natural fortifications of that vineyard which was "hedged round about" with tower and trench, sea and desert, against the "boars of the wood," and "the beast of the field."

In Palestine, as in Greece, every traveler is struck with the smallness of the territory. He is surprised, even after all that he has heard, at passing, in one long day, from the capital of Judæa to that of Samaria; or at seeing within eight hours, three such spots, as Hebron, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem. The breadth of the country from the Jordan to the sea is rarely more than fifty miles. Its length from Dan to Beersheba is about a hundred and eighty miles. The time is now gone by, when the grandeur of a country is measured by its size, or the diminutive extent of an illustrious people can otherwise than enhance the magnitude of what they have done. The ancient taunt, however, and the facts which suggested it, may still illustrate the feeling which appears in their own records. The contrast between the littleness of Palestine and the vast extent of the empires which hung upon its northern and southern skirts, is rarely absent from the mind of the Prophets and Psalmists. It helps them to exalt their sense of the favor of God towards their land by magnifying their little hills and dry torrent-beds into an equality with the giant hills of Lebanon and Hermon and the sea-like rivers of Mesopotamia. It also fosters the consciousness, that they were not always to be restrained within these earthly barriers—"The place is too strait for me; give me place where I may dwell." Nor is it only the smallness, but the narrowness, of the territory which is remarkable. From almost every high point in the country, its whole breadth is visible, from the long wall of the Moab hills on the east, to the Mediterranean Sea on the west. Whatever may be the poverty or insignificance of the landscape, it is at once relieved by a glimpse of either of these two boundaries.

> "Two voices are there—one is of the sea,
> One of the mountains,"—

and the close proximity of each—the deep purple shade of the one, and the glittering waters of the other—makes it always possible for one or other of those two voices to be heard

now, as they were by the Psalmist of old. "The strength of the '*mountains*' is his also—the *sea* is his, and He made it."

Thus, although the Israelites were shut off by the southern and eastern deserts from the surrounding nations, they yet were always able to look beyond themselves. They had no connection with either the eastern empires or the western isles—but they could not forget them. As in the words and forms of their worship they were constantly reminded how they had once been strangers in the land of Egypt; so the sight of the hills beyond the Jordan, and of the sea beyond the Philistine plain, were in their daily life a memorial that they were there secluded not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the world in whose center they were set. The mountains of Gilead, and on the south, the long ridges of Arabia, were at hand to remind them of those distant regions from which their first fathers, Abraham and Jacob, had wandered into the country,—from which "the camels and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah" were once again to pour in. The sea, whitening then as now with the ships of Tarshish, the outline of Chittim or Cyprus just visible in the clear evening horizon, must have told them of the western world where lay the "isles of the Gentiles," which "should come to their light, and kings to the brightness of their rising. . . . . Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first." The very name of the "west" was to them "the sea;" and it is not merely a poetic image, but a natural reflex of their whole history and situation, that the great revelation of the expansion of the Jewish system to meet the wants of all nations should have been made to the apostle on the house-top at Jaffa—

> "When o'er the glowing western main
> His wistful brow was upward raised;
> Where, like an angel's train,
> The burnished water blazed."

This leads us to another point of view, in which the situa-

tion of Palestine is remarkably bound up with its future destinies. "I have set Jerusalem in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her." In later times this passage was taken in the literal sense that Palestine, and Jerusalem especially, was actually the center of the earth—a belief of which the memorial is yet preserved in the large round stone still kissed devoutly by Greek pilgrims, in their portion of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is one of the many instances in which the innocent fancy of an earlier faith has been set aside by the discoveries of later science. In the East, probably, there are still many points of this kind which have been long surrendered in the more stirring West. But there was a real truth in it at the time that the Prophet wrote, which the subsequent course of history makes it now difficult for us to realize. Palestine, though now at the very outskirts of that tide of civilization which has swept far into the remotest West, was then the vanguard of the eastern, and therefore, of the civilized world; and, moreover, stood midway between the two great seats of ancient empire, Babylon and Egypt. It was on the high road from one to the other of these mighty powers, the prize for which they contended, the battle-field on which they fought—the high bridge, over which they ascended and descended respectively into the deep basins of the Nile and Euphrates. Its first appearance on the stage of history is as a halting-place for a wanderer from Mesopotamia, who "passed through the land," and "journeyed going on still toward the south," and "went down into Egypt." The first great struggle which that wanderer had to maintain, was against the host of Chedorlaomer, from Persia and from Babylon. The battle in which the latest hero of the Jewish monarchy perished, was to check the advance of an Egyptian king on his way to contest the empire of the then known world with the King of Assyria at Carchemish. The whole history of Palestine, between the return from the captivity and the Christian era, is a contest between the "kings of the north and the kings of the south"—the descendants of Se-

leucus and the descendants of Ptolemy,—for the possession of the country. And when at last the West begins to rise as a new power on the horizon, Palestine as the nearest point of contact between the two worlds, becomes the scene of the chief conflicts of Rome with Asia. There is no other country in the world which could exhibit the same confluence of associations, as that which is awakened by the rocks which overhang the crystal stream of the Dog River, where it rushes through the ravines of Lebanon into the Mediterranean Sea; where side by side are to be seen the hieroglyphics of the great Rameses, the cuneiform characters of Sennacherib, and the Latin inscriptions of the Emperor Antoninus.

This is the most convenient place for noticing a peculiarity of the present aspect of Palestine, which though not, properly speaking, a physical feature, is so closely connected both with its outward imagery and with its general situation, that it can not be omitted. Above all other countries in the world, it is a *Land of Ruins.* It is not that the particular ruins are on a scale equal to those of Greece or Italy, still less to those of Egypt. But there is no country in which they are so numerous, none in which they bear so large a proportion to the villages and towns still in existence. In Judæa it is hardly an exaggeration to say that whilst for miles and miles there is no appearance of present life or habitation, except the occasional goat-herd on the hill-side, or gathering of women at the wells, there is yet hardly a hill-top of the many within sight which is not covered by the vestiges of some fortress or city of former ages. Sometimes they are fragments of ancient walls, sometimes mere foundations and piles of stone, but always enough to indicate signs of human habitation and civilization. Such is the case in Western Palestine. In Eastern Palestine, and still more if we include the Haurân and the Lebanon, the same picture is continued, although under a somewhat different aspect. Here the ancient cities remain, in like manner deserted, ruined, but standing; not mere masses and heaps of stone, but towns and houses, in amount and in a

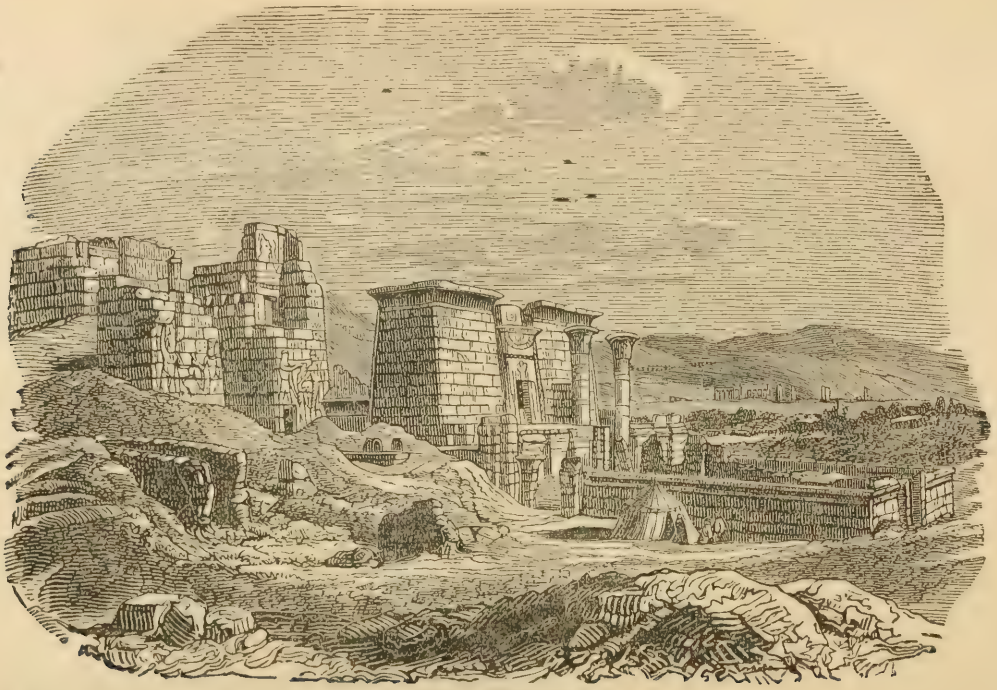


TEMPLE OF BIRS-NIMRUD—BABEL (TOWER OF TONGUES.)

The ruins of the vast Tower, notwithstanding all the degradations of man, generation after generation, and the waste of time, age after age, still remain an enduring monument of the ambitious impiety of an ancient race and of the avenging justice of God.

state of preservation which have no parallel except in the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, buried under the eruption of Vesuvius. Not even in Rome or Athens, hardly in Egyptian Thebes, can ancient buildings be found in such magnitude and such profusion as at Baalbec, Jerash, and Palmyra. No where else, it is said, can all the details of Roman domestic architecture be seen so clearly as in the hundreds of deserted villages which stand on the red desert of the Haurân. This difference between the ruins of the two regions of Palestine arises, no doubt, from the circumstance, that whereas Eastern Syria has been for the last four hundred years entirely, for the last fifteen hundred years nearly, deserted by civilized, almost by barbarian, man, Western Palestine has always been the resort of a population which, however rude and scanty, has been sufficiently numerous and energetic to destroy and to appropriate edifices which in the less frequented parts beyond the Jordan have escaped through neglect and isolation.

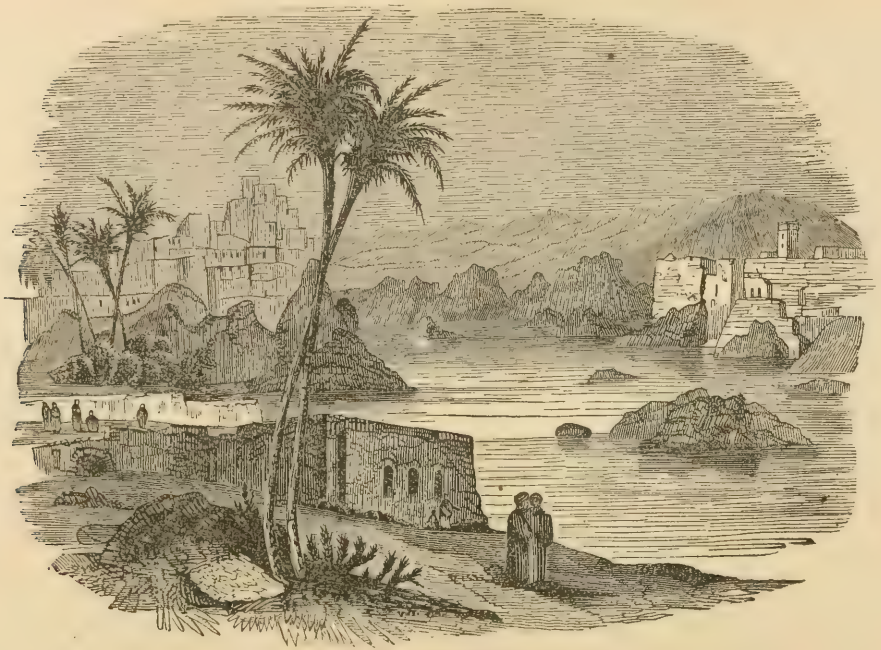
But the general fact of the ruins of Palestine, whether erect or fallen, remains common to the whole country; deepens and confirms, if it does not create, the impression of age and decay, which belongs to almost every view of Palestine, and invests it with an appearance which can be called by no other name than *venerable*. Moreover, it carries us deep into the historical peculiarities of the country. The ruins we now see are of the most diverse ages; Saracenic, Crusading, Roman, Grecian, Jewish, extending perhaps even to the old Canaanitish remains, before the arrival of Joshua. This variety, this accumulation of destruction, is the natural result of the position which has made Palestine for so many ages the thoroughfare and prize of the world. And although we now see this aspect brought out in a fuller light than ever before, yet as far back as the history and language of Palestine reaches, it was familiar to the inhabitants of the country. In the rich, local vocabulary of the Hebrew language, the words for sites of ruined cities occupy a remarkable place. Four separate designations are used for the several stages of decay



"NO."—THEBES.

or of destruction, which were to be seen even during the first vigor of the Israelite conquest and monarchy. There was the rude "cairn," or pile of stones roughly rolled together. There was the mound or heap of ruin, which, like the Monte Testaccio at Rome was composed of the rubbish and débris of a fallen city. There were the forsaken villages, such as those in the Haurân, when "the cities were wasted without inhabitant and the houses without man,"—"forsaken, and not a man to dwell therein." There are lastly, true ruins, such as those to which we give the name—buildings standing, yet shattered, like those of Baalbec or Palmyra.

What, therefore, we now see, must to a certain extent have been seen always—a country strewed with the relics of an earlier civilization; a country exhibiting even in the first dawn of history the theater of successive conquests and destructions —"giants dwelling therein of old time . . . . a people great, and many, and tall, ... but the Lord destroyed them before those that came after; and they succeeded them and dwelt in their stead."



RUINS OF AN EGYPTIAN CITY.

Seen to be very limited in extent, compared with those of cities in Palestine.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CLIMATE AND SCENERY OF PALESTINE.

BY A. P. STANLEY, DEAN OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

The Land of "Milk and Honey"—Destruction of Forests—Contrast with the Desert—Contrast with Assyria and Egypt—Variety of Structure and Climate—Palestine a Mountainous Country—Aram—The Views of Sacred History—What Abraham Saw from Bethel—What Balaam Saw from the Hills of Moab—What Moses Saw from Pisgah—What Jesus Saw from the Mount of Temptation—The Fenced Cities—The "High Places"—Political Divisions and Conquests—Highlands and Lowlands—Distinction Between Palestine and Other Half-civilized Countries—Scenery of Palestine.

BUT this aspect of the land, whilst it reminds us in some respects of the identity of its present appearance with that of the past, reminds us still more forcibly of its difference.

The countless ruins of Palestine, of whatever date they may be, tell us at a glance that we must not judge the resources of the ancient land by its present depressed and desolate state. They show us not only that "Syria might support tenfold its present population, and bring forth tenfold its present produce," but that it actually did so. And this brings us to the question which Eastern travelers so often ask, and are asked on their return, "Can these stony hills, these deserted valleys, be indeed the Land of Promise, the land flowing with milk and honey?"

There are two answers to this question. First, as has just been observed, the country must have been very different when every hill was crowned with a flourishing town or village, from what it is since it ceased to be the seat not only of civilization, but in many instances even of the population and

habitations which once fertilized it. "The entire destruction of the woods which once covered the mountains, and the utter neglect of the terraces which supported the soil on steep declivities, have given full scope to the rains, which have left may tracts of bare rock, where formerly were vineyards and cornfields." It is probable, too, that, as in Europe generally, since the disappearance of the German forests, and in Greece, since the fall of the plane-trees which once shaded the bare landscape of Attica, the gradual cessation of rain produced by this loss of vegetation has exposed the country in a greater degree than in early times to the evils of drought. This at least is the effect of the testimony of residents at Jerusalem, within whose experience the Kedron has recently for the first time flowed with a copious torrent, evidently in consequence of the numerous enclosures of mulberry and olive groves, made within the last few years by the Greek convent, and in themselves a sample of the different aspect which such cultivation more widely extended would give to the whole country. The forest of Hareth, and the thicket-wood of Ziph, in Judæa; the forest of Bethel; the forest of Sharon; the forests which gave their name to Kirjath-jearim, "the city of forests," have long disappeared. Palm-trees, which are now all but unknown on the hills of Palestine, formerly grew, as we shall presently see, with myrtles and pines, on the now almost barren slopes of Olivet; and groves of oak and terebinth, though never frequent, must have been certainly more common than at present. The very labor which was expended on these barren hills of Palestine in former times, has increased their present sterility. The natural vegetation has been swept away, and no human cultivation now occupies the terraces which once took the place of forests and pastures.

Secondly, even without such an effort of imagination as is required to conceive an altered state of population and civilization, it is enough to remember the actual situation of Palestine, in its relation to the surrounding countries of the East. We do not sufficiently bear in mind that the East, that is the

country between the Mediterranean and the table-lands of Persia, between the Sahara and the Persian gulf, is a waterless desert, only diversified here and there by strips and patches of vegetation. Such green spots or tracts,—which are in fact but oases on a large scale,—are the rich plains on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, the long strips of verdure on the banks of the Nile, the occasional centres of vegetation in Arabia Felix and Idumea; and, lastly, the cultivated though narrow territory of Palestine itself. It is true that as compared with the depth of soil and richness of vegetation on the banks of the Nile, or with the carpet of flowers described on the banks of the Chebar, Palestine seems poor and bare. But as compared with the whole surrounding country in the midst of which it stands, it is unquestionably a fertile land in the midst of barrenness. The impression on entering it from the south has been already described. The desert often encroaches upon it—the hills of Anti-Libanus which overhang the plain of Damascus, and those which bound Judæa on the east, are as truly parts of the wilderness as Sinai itself. But the interior of the country is never entirely destitute of the signs of life, and the long tracts of Esdraelon, and the sea-coast and the plain of Gennesareth, are, or may be, as rich with gardens and with cornfields as the most favored spots in Egypt. And there is, moreover, this peculiarity which distinguishes Palestine from the only countries with which it could then be brought into comparison. Chaldea and Egypt—the latter of course in an eminent degree—depend on the course of single rivers. Without the Nile, and the utmost use of the waters of the Nile, Egypt would be a desert. But Palestine is well distinguised not merely as "a land of wheat and barley, and vines, and figtrees, and pomegranates, of oil-olive and honey," but emphatically as "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of 'plains' and 'mountains'" —"not as the land of Egypt, where thou sowedst thy seed and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: but as

a land of 'mountains' and 'plains,' which drinketh water of the rain of heaven." This mountainous character — this abundance of water both from natural springs and from the clouds of heaven, in contradistinction to the one uniform supply of the great river; this abundance of "milk" from its "cattle on a thousand hills," of "honey" from its forests and its thymy shrubs, was absolutely peculiar to Palestine amongst the civilized nations of the East. Feeble as its brooks might be,—though, doubtless, they were then more frequently filled than now—yet still it was the only country where an Eastern could have been familiar with the image of the Psalmist: "He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the 'mountains.'" Those springs, too, however short-lived, are remarkable for their copiousness and beauty. Not only not in the East, but hardly in the West, can any fountains and sources of streams be seen so clear, so full-grown even at their birth, as those which fall into the Jordan and its lakes through its whole course from north to south. Wales or Westmoreland are, doubtless, not regarded as fertile regions; and the green fields of England, to those who have come fresh from Palestine, seem, by way of contrast, to be indeed "a land of promise." But transplant Wales or Westmoreland into the heart of the desert, and they would be far more to the inhabitant of the desert than to their inhabitants are the richest spots of England. Far more: both because the contrast is in itself greater, and because the phenomena of a mountain country, with wells and springs, are of a kind almost unknown to the dwellers in the deserts or river-plains of the East.

Palestine, therefore, not merely by its situation, but by its comparative fertility, might well be considered the prize of the Eastern world, the possession of which was the mark of God's peculiar favor; the spot for which the nations would contend: as on a smaller scale the Bedouin tribes for some "diamond of the desert"—some "palm-grove, islanded amid the waste." And a land of which the blessings were so evidently the gift of God, not, as in Egypt, of man's labor,

which also, by reason of its narrow extent, was so constantly within reach and sight of the neighboring desert, was eminently calculated to raise the thoughts of the nation to the Supreme Giver of all these blessings, and to bind it by the dearest ties to the land which He had so manifestly favored.

What has been already said is enough to indicate the extraordinary variety of structure and temperature exhibited in the Holy Land. It is said by Volney, and apparently with justice, that there is no district on the face of the earth which contains so many and such sudden transitions. Such a country furnished at once the natural theatre of a history and a literature, which was destined to spread into nations accustomed to the most various climates and imagery. There must of course, under any circumstances, be much in the history of any nation, eastern or western, northern or southern, which, to other quarters of the world, will be more or less unintelligible. Still it is easy to conceive that whatever difficulty is presented to European or American minds by the sacred writings, might have been greatly aggravated had the Bible come into existence in a country more limited in its outward imagery than is the case with Palestine. If the Valley of the Nile or the Arabian Desert had witnessed the whole of the sacred history, it is impossible not to feel how widely separated it would have been from the ordinary European mind; how small a portion of our feelings and imaginations would have been represented by it. The truths might have been the same, but the forms in which they were clothed would have affected only a few here and there, leaving the great mass untouched. But as it is, we have the life of a Bedouin tribe, of an agricultural people, of seafaring cities; the extremes of barbarism and of civilization; the aspects of plain and of mountain; of a tropical, of an eastern, and almost of a northern climate. In Egypt there is a continual contact of desert and cultivated land; in Greece, there is a constant intermixture of the views of sea and land; in the ascent and descent of the great mountains of South America there is an interchange

of the torrid and the arctic zones; in England there is an alternation of wild hills and valleys with rich fields and plains. But in Palestine all these are combined. The patriarchs could here gradually exchange the nomadic life for the pastoral, and then for the agricultural, passing almost insensibly from one to the other as the desert melts imperceptibly into the hills of Palestine. Ishmael and Esau could again wander back into the sandy waste which lay at their very doors. The scapegoat could still be sent from the temple-courts into the uninhabited wilderness. John, and a greater than John, could return in a day's journey from the busiest haunts of men into the solitudes beyond the Jordan. The various tribes could find their several occupations of shepherds, of warriors, of traffickers, according as they were settled on the margin of the desert, in the mountain fastnesses, or on the shore of the Mediterranean. The sacred poetry, which was to be the delight and support of the human mind and the human soul in all regions of the world, embraced within its range the natural features of almost every country. The venerable poet of our mountain regions used to dwell with genuine emotion on the pleasure he felt in the reflection that the Psalmists and Prophets dwelt in a mountainous country, and enjoyed its beauty as truly as himself. The devotions of our great maritime empire find a natural expression in the numerous allusions, which no inland situation could have permitted, to the roar of the Mediterranean Sea, breaking over the rocks of Acre and Tyre,—"the floods lift up their voice, the floods lift up their waves,"—the "great and wide sea," whose blue waters could be seen from the top of almost every mountain, "wherein are things creeping innumerable." There go the Phœnician "ships" with their white sails, and "there is that Leviathan," the monster of the deep, which both Jewish and Grecian fancy was wont to place in the inland ocean, which was to them all, and more than all, what the Atlantic is to us. Thither, "they went down" from their mountains, and "did their business in ships," in the "great waters," and saw the

"wonders" of the "deep;" and along those shores where the "havens," few and far between, "where they would be" when "the storm became calm, and the waves thereof were still." And with these milder, and to us more familiar images, were blended the more terrible, as well as the more beautiful forms, of tropical and eastern life. There was the earthquake and possibly the volcano. "He looketh on the earth and it trembleth—He toucheth the mountains and they smoke." "The mountains shall be molten under Him, and the valleys shall be cleft as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place." There was the hurricane, with its thick darkness, and the long continuous roll of the oriental thunder-storm. "He bowed the Heavens and came down, and there was darkness under His feet. . . . He rode upon the wings of the wind. . . . The Lord thundered out of heaven, and the Highest gave His voice, hailstones and coals of fire. . . . The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire." Hermon, with his snowy summit always in sight, furnished the images which else could hardly have been looked for,—"snow and vapors,"—"snow like wool," "hoar-frost like ashes"—"ice like morsels." From the jungle of the Jordan Valley and the wild mountains of Judah, came the "lions roaring after their prey." And then again, the upland hills experienced all the usual alternations of the seasons; the "rain descending on the mown grass," the "early and the latter rain," the mountains "watered from His chambers, the earth satisfied with the fruit of His works;" which, though not the same as the ordinary returns of a European climate, were yet far more like it than could be found in Egypt, Arabia, or Assyria.

Such instances of the variety of Jewish experience in Palestine, as contrasted with that of any other country, might easily be multiplied. But enough has been said to show its fitness for the history or the poetry of a nation with a universal destiny, and to indicate one at least of the methods by which that destiny was fostered; the sudden contrasts of the vari-

ous aspects of life and death, sea and land, verdure and desert, storm and calm, heat and cold, which, so far as any natural means could assist, cultivated what has been well called the "variety in unity, so characteristic of the sacred books of Israel; so unlike those of India, of Persia, of Egypt, of Arabia.

Amidst this great diversity of physical features, undoubtedly the one which most prevails over the others is its mountainous character. As a general rule, Palestine is not merely a mountainous country, but a mass of mountains, rising from a level sea-coast on the west, and from a level desert on the east, only cut asunder by the valley of the Jordan from north to south, and by the valley of Jezreel from east to west. The result of this peculiarity is, that not merely the hill-tops, but the valleys and plains of the interior of Palestine, both east and west, are themselves so high above the level of the sea, as to partake of all the main characteristics of mountainous history and scenery. Jerusalem is of nearly the same elevation as Skiddaw, and most of the chief cities of Palestine are several hundred feet above the Mediterranean Sea.

Many expressions of the Old and New Testaments have immediate reference to this configuration of the country, the more remarkable from its contrast with the flat from which it rises on the east and south. This probably is at least one signification of the earliest name by which not Palestine alone, but the whole chain of mountains of which it is an offshoot, was called,—"Aram," or the "highlands," as distinguished from "Canaan," "the lowlands" or plain of the sea-coast on the west, and the "Beka" or great plain of the Mesopotamian deserts on the east. "Aram" (or *Syria*, the word by which the Greeks translated the word into their own language), seems to have been the general appellation of the whole sweep of mountains which enclose the western plains of Asia, and which were thus designated, like the various ranges of Maratime, Graian, Pennine, and Julian Alps, by some affix or epithet to distinguish one portion from another.

However this may be, there can be no doubt that in Palestine we are in the "Highlands" of Asia. This was the more remarkable in connection with the Israelites, because they were the only civilized nation then existing in the world, which dwelt in a mountainous country. The great states of Egypt, of Assyria, of India, rose in the plains formed by the mighty rivers of those empires. The mountains from which those rivers descended were the haunts of the barbarian races who, from time to time, descended to conquer or ravage these rich and level tracts. But the Hebrew people was raised above the other ancient states, equally in its moral and in its physical relations. From the Desert of Arabia to Hebron is a continual ascent, and from that ascent there is no descent of any importance except to the plains of the Jordan, Esdræ-lon, and the coast. To "go down into Egypt," to "go up into Canaan," were expressions as true as they are frequent in the account of the patriarchal migrations to and fro between the two countries. From a mountain sanctuary, as it were, Israel looked over the world. "The mountain of the Lord's house,"—"established on the tops of the mountains,"—"exalted above the hills,"—to which "all nations should go up," was the image in which the prophets delighted to represent the future glory of their country. When "the Lord had a controversy with his people," it was to be "before the mountains and the hills," and "the strong foundations of the earth." When the messengers of glad tidings returned from the captivity, their feet were "beautiful upon the mountains." It was to the "mountains" of Israel that the exile lifted up his eyes, as the place from "whence his help came." To the oppressed it was "the mountains" that brought "judgment, and the hills righteousness." "My mountains"—"my holy mountain,"—are expressions for the whole country.

One striking consequence of this elevation of the whole mass of the country is that every high point in it commands a prospect of greater extent than is common in ordinary mountain districts. On almost every eminence there is an

opportunity for one of those wide views or surveys which abound in the history of Palestine, and which, more than anything else, connect together our impression of events and of the scene on which they were enacted. There are first the successive views of Abraham; as when on "the mountain east of Bethel," "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan,"—and Abraham "lifted up his eyes, and looked from the place where he was, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward;" or again, when "Abraham looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah . . . and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace;" or yet again, when "he lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off in the land of Moriah." In the later history there is unfolded still more distinctly the view of Balaam from the "high places of Moab," where "from the top of the rocks he saw "from the hills he beheld," not only "the tents of Jacob" and the "tabernacles of Israel," with their future greatness rising far in the distance, but the surrounding nations also, whose fate was interwoven with theirs —and he thought of Edom and Seir, and "looked on Amalek" and "looked on the Kenite." And close upon this follows the view—the most famous in all time, the proverb of all languages —when from that same spot—"the field of Zophim on the top of Pisgah,"—Moses, from "the mountain of Nebo, the top of Pisgah," saw "all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and all Naphthali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar." Such too, in vision, was the "very high mountain, in the land of Israel," from which Ezekiel saw the "frame of the city," and "the waters issuing to the east country," "the desert," and "the sea." Such—in vision, also—was the mountain "exceeding high," which revealed on the day of the temptation "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." Such —not in vision, but in the most certain reality, was that double view of Jerusalem from Mount Olivet—the first, when,

at the sudden turn of the road from Bethany, "He beheld the city, and wept over it," the second, when "He sat on the Mount of Olives, over against the temple," and saw those "great buildings."

Other prospects such as of Jacob from Mahanaim, of Deborah from Mount Tabor, of Solomon from Gibeon, though not detailed, can well be imagined; others, again, though belonging to later times, are yet full of interest—the view, whether historical or legendary, of Mahomet over Damascus; the view of Jerusalem, as Titus saw it from the heights of Scopus, or as it burst, eleven centuries later, on the crusading armies at the same spot, or as the pilgrims beheld it from "Montjoye."

To all these I shall return in detail as we come to them in their several localities. No other history contains so many of these points of contact between the impressions of life and the impressions of outward scenery. But, besides this imaginative result, if one may so say, the mountainous character of Palestine is intimately connected with its history, both religious and political.

The infinite multiplication of these hills renders intelligible two points constantly recurring in the history of the Jewish people—the "fenced cities" and the "high places." From the earliest times of the occupation of the country by a civilized and stationary people, we hear of the cities great and "walled *up to heaven*," which terrified the Israelite spies; of the "fenced cities" attacked by Sennacherib, of the various hill-forts, Jotapata, Masada, Bether, which in the last Jewish wars held out against the Roman forces. This is still the appearance of the existing villages or ruined cities, chiefly indeed in Judæa, but also throughout the country, in this respect more like the towns of the aboriginal inhabitants of Italy—"præruptis oppida saxis"—than those of any other country. A city in a valley, instead of being as elsewhere the rule, is here the exception; every valley has its hill, and on that hill a city is set that "cannot be hid." From still



DAMASCUS.

Near here Abram defeated the combined armies under Chedorlaomer, and afterwards received the promise of a son. It was near this place also that Saul was miraculously converted.

earlier times, the same tendency is observable in their religious history. These multiplied heights were so many natural altars: at Bethel, on Moriah, at Dan, at Gibeon, on Mount Zion, on Olivet, altars were successively erected. The national worship down to the time of Hezekiah may almost be said to have been a religion of high places. There was no one height of itself sufficient to command universal acquiescence. In this equality of mountains, all were alike eligible.

Again, the combination of this mass of hills with its border plains and with the deserts from which it rises, has deeply affected its political and military history. The allocation of the particular portions of Palestine to its successive inhabitants, will best appear as we proceed. But the earliest and most fundamental distributions of territory are according to the simple division of the country into its highlands and lowlands. "The Amalekites," that is, the Bedouin tribes, "dwell in the land of the south," that is, on the desert frontier,—"and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the mountains," that is, the central mass of hills—"and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and by the 'side' of Jordan," that is, on the western and eastern plains. And of the early inhabitants thus enumerated, those who at least by their names are brought into the sharpest geographical contrast are the Amorites or "dwellers on the summits," and the Canaanites or "lowlanders."

But it is in the history of the conquest of Palestine, that this peculiarity is the most strongly brought out. In most countries which consist of mountains and lowlands, two historical results are observable; first, that, in the case of invasion, the aboriginal inhabitants are driven to the mountains, and the plains have fallen into the hands of the conquerors; secondly, that, in the case of semi-barbarous countries so situated, the plains are the secure, the mountains the insecure parts of the region. In Palestine, both these results are reversed. Although some few of the ancient Amorite tribes, such as the Jebusites, retained their strongholds in the hills



BEDOUIN ENCAMPMENT.
In general character what an Amalekite encampment was in David's day.

for many years after the first conquest of Joshua, yet by far the majority of instances recorded as resisting the progress of the conquerors are in the plains. The hills of Judah and Ephraim were soon occupied, but "Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of Bethshan, . . nor Taanach, . . nor Dor, . . . nor Ibleam, . . . nor Megiddo, . . [from the plains of Esdraelon and Sharon,] but the Canaanites would dwell in the land. Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, , . nor of Zidon, . . nor . . of Achzib . . [in the bay of Acre, and the coast of Phœnicia] . . but the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, for they did not drive them out." "And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain, for they would not suffer them to come down into the valley. But the Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon and Shaalbim, yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries." We are not left to conjecture as to one at least of the reasons. "The Lord was with Judah, and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley—*because they had chariots of iron.*" The Israelites were a nation of infantry. Their nomadic life, in this respect, differing from that of the modern Bedouins, was without horses; and even after their settlement in Palestine, horses and chariots were unknown as a national possession until the reign of Solomon. The Canaanites, on the contrary, were famous for their chariots. One chief alone is described as possessing "nine hundred;" and even after the partial introduction of them during the Jewish monarchy, the contrast between the infantry of the Israelites and the chariots of the armies from Damascus, suggested the same comparison that might have been made by the Canaanites in the days of Joshua. "Their gods are gods of the 'mountains;' therefore they are stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the 'level,' and surely we shall be stronger than they." A glance at the description of Palestine given above, will show how exactly this tallies with the

actual results. Roads for wheeled vehicles are unknown now in any part of Palestine; and in the earlier history they are very rarely mentioned as a general means of communication. The "chariots" of Jehu and of Ahab are only described as driven along the plain of Esdraelon. Under the Romans, indeed, the same astonishing genius for road-making which carried the Via Flaminia through the Apennines, and has left traces of itself in the narrow pass of the Scironian rocks, may have increased the facilities of communication in Palestine, and hence, perhaps, the mention of the chariot-road through the pass from Jerusalem to Gaza, where the Ethiopian met Philip. But under ordinary circumstances, they must have always been more or less impracticable in the mountain regions. It was in the plains, accordingly, that the enemies of Israel were usually successful.

Another cause, not indeed for the success of the Canaanites' resistance, but for the tenacity with which they clung to the plains, is to be seen in their great superiority both for agricultural and nomadic purposes to anything in the hills of Judæa or Ephraim. "Judah," we are told, at first "took Gaza, and Askelon, and Ekron." But these cities, with their coasts, soon fell again into the hands of the Philistines, whether the old inhabitants, or, as there is some reason to think, a new race of settlers, subsequent to the first conquest. And then, for more than four centuries, a struggle was maintained till the reign of David. It was the richest portion of the country, and the Philistines might well fight for it to the last gasp. In the same way, Tyre and Sidon, Accho and Gaza, cared but little for the new comers, if they could but retain their hold on the corn-fields and the sea.

And this brings us to the other peculiarity which distinguishes Palestine at the present day, from other half-civilized regions. In Greece and Italy and Spain, it is the mountainous tract which is beset with banditti—the level country which is safe. In Palestine, on the contrary, the mountain tracts are comparatively secure, though infested by villages of he-

reditary ruffians here and there; but the plains, with hardly an exception, are more or less dangerous. Perhaps the most striking contrast is the passage from the Haurân and plain of Damascus, to the uplands of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, with their quiet villages, and fruit-gardens, breathing an atmosphere almost of European comfort and security. The cause is soon told. Palestine, as we have before seen, is an island in a desert waste—but from this very fact it is also an island in the midst of pirates. The Bedouin tribes are the corsairs of the wilderness; the plains which run into the mountains are the creeks into which they naturally penetrate. Far up the plains of Philistia and Sharon come the Arabs of the Tih; deep into the center of Palestine, into the plain of Esdraelon, especially when the harvest has left the fields clear for pasturage, come the Arabs of the Haurân and of Gilead. The same levels which of old gave an opening to the chariots of the Canaanites, now admit the inroad of these wandering shepherds. On one occasion, even in ancient times, there was a migration of Bedouins into Palestine on a gigantic scale; when the Midianites and Amalekites, and children of the East, encamped against the Israelites in their maritime plain, "with their cattle and their tents," and "pitched" their tents in Esdraelon, and "lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude." This, doubtless, was a great exception, and in the flourishing times of the Jewish Monarchy and of the Roman Empire, the hordes of the desert were kept out, or were, as in the case of the tribes of Petra in the time of the Herods, brought within the range of a partial civilization. But now, like the sands of their own deserts which engulf the monuments of Egypt, no longer defended by a watchful and living population, they have broken in upon the country far and near; and in the total absence of solitary dwelling-places—in the gathering together of all the settled inhabitants into villages,—and in the walls which, as at Jerusalem, enclose the cities round, with locked gates and guarded towers—we see the effect of the constant terror which they inspire. It

is the same peculiarity of Eastern life, as was exhibited in its largest proportions in the vast fortifications with which Nineveh and Babylon shut themselves in against the attacks of the Bedouins of the Assyrian Desert, and in the great wall which still defends the Chinese empire against the Mongolian tribes, who are to the civilization of Northern Asia, what the Arabs are to that of the south.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

NATURAL PRODUCTIONS AND SOIL OF PALESTINE.

BY A. P. STANLEY, DEAN OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Vegetation of Palestine — Trees — Olives — Cedars of Lebanon—Oaks — Terebinths—Abraham's Oak—Sacred Trees—Oak of Moreh—Oak of Mamre—Palms—Sycamores—Oleanders—The Wells of Palestine—Springs—Sepulchres—Caves—Legendary Curiosities.

WHAT has already been said of the physical configuration of the country, must to a great extent have anticipated what can be said of its scenery. Yet the character of scenery depends so much on its form and color, as well as its material—on its expression as well as its features—that, unless something more is said, we shall have but a faint image of what was presented to the view of Patriarch or Prophet, King or Psalmist. Those who describe Palestine as beautiful must have either a very inaccurate notion of what constitutes beauty of scenery, or must have viewed the country through a highly colored medium. As a general rule, not only is it without the two main elements of beauty—variety of outline and variety of color—but the features rarely so group together as to form any distinct or impressive combination. The tangled and featureless hills of the lowlands of Scotland and North Wales are perhaps the nearest likeness accessible to Englishmen, of the general landscape of Palestine south of the plain of Esdraelon.

Rounded hills, chiefly of a gray color—gray partly from the limestone of which they are all formed, partly from the tufts of gray shrub with which their sides are thinly clothed, and from the prevalence of the olive—their sides formed into con-

centric rings of rock, which must have served in ancient times as supports to the terraces, of which there are still traces to their very summits; valleys, or rather the meetings of these gray slopes with the beds of dry water-courses at their feet—long sheets of bare rock laid like flagstones, side by side, along the soil—these are the chief features of the greater part of the scenery of the historical parts of Palestine. In such a landscape the contrast of every exception is doubly felt. The deep shade of the mountain wall beyond the Jordan,—or again the level plains of the coast and of Esdraelon, each cut out of the mountains as if with a knife,—become striking features where all else is monotonous. The eye rests with peculiar eagerness on the few instances in which the gentle depressions become deep ravines, as in those about Jerusalem, or those leading down to the valley of the Jordan; or in which the mountains assume a bold and peculiar form, as Lebanon and Hermon at the head of the whole country, or Tabor, Nebi-Samuel, and the "Frank mountain," in the center of the hills themselves.

These rounded hills, occasionally stretching into long undulating ranges, are for the most part bare of wood. Forest and large timber (with a few exceptions, hereafter to be mentioned), are not known. Corn-fields and, in the neighborhood of Christian populations as at Bethlehem, vineyards creep along the ancient terraces. In the spring, the hills and valleys are covered with thin grass and the aromatic shrubs which clothe more or less almost the whole of Syria and Arabia. But they also grow with what is peculiar to Palestine, a profusion of wild flowers, daisies, the white flower called the Star of Bethlehem, but especially with a blaze of scarlet flowers of all kinds, chiefly anemones, wild tulips, and poppies. Of all the ordinary aspects of the country, this blaze of scarlet color is perhaps the most peculiar; and, to those who first enter the Holy Land, it is no wonder that it has suggested the touching and significant name of "the Saviour's blood-drops."

It is this contrast between the brilliant colors of the flow-



VIEW OF OLD OLIVE TREES IN GETHSEMANE.

From an Original Photograph by J. Graham, Esq.

ers and the sober hue of the rest of the landscape, that gives force to the words,—"Consider the lilies of the field. . . For I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Whatever was the special flower designated by the lily of the field, the rest of the passage indicates that it was of the gorgeous hues which might be compared to the robes of the great king. The same remark applies, though in a less degree, to the frequent mention of the same flower in the Canticles,—"I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys," "as the lily among thorns," "he feedeth among the lilies," "he is gone to gather lilies."

The same general bareness and poverty sets off in the same way the rare exceptions in the larger forms of vegetable life. The olive, the fig, and the pomegranate, which form the usual vegetation of the country, are so humble in stature, that they hardly attract the eye till the spectator is amongst them. Then indeed the twisted stems and silver foliage of the first, the dark, broad leaf of the second, the tender, green and scarlet blossoms of the third, are amongst the most beautiful of sights, even when stripped of the associations which would make the tamest of their kind venerable. On the lower slopes of the hills, olives especially are more or less thickly scattered, with that peculiar color and form which they share in common with those of Greece and of Italy; to English eyes best represented by aged willows. But there are a few trees which emerge from this general obscurity. Foremost stand the cedars of Lebanon. In ancient times the sides of that mountain were covered with them. Now, they are only found in one small hollow on its north-western slope. But there can be little doubt that they were always confined to the range of Lebanon, and therefore, properly speaking, were not trees of Palestine at all. The expression of Keble,—

"Far o'er the cedar shade some tower of giant old,"

never could have been true of the woods and ruins of Judea. It was the very remoteness of this noble tree, combined with



CEDARS OF LEBANON.
Such as formerly adorned the Lebanon road. A single grove remains.

its majestic height and sweeping branches, that made it, one may almost say, an object of religious reverence. It is hardly ever named without the addition, either of the lofty mountain where it grew,—"the cedars of Lebanon,"—or of some epithet implying its grandeur and glory,—"the trees of the Lord," the "cedars which He hath planted," "the tall cedars," "the cedars high and lifted up," "whose height is like the height of the cedars," "spread abroad like the cedar," "with fair branches," "with a shadowing shroud," "of an high stature," "his top among the thick boughs," "his height exalted above all the trees of the field," "his boughs multiplied, his branches long," "fair in his greatness," "in the length of his branches," "by the multitude of his branches." These expressions clearly indicate that to them the cedar was a portent, a grand and awful work of God. The words would never have been used had it been a familiar sight amongst their ordinary gardens, as it is in ours. It is said that the clergy of the Greek church still offer up mass under their branches, as though they formed a natural temple, and that the Arabs call them the "trees of God." This may now be a homage to the extreme antiquity of those which are left; but it may also be a continuation of the ancient feeling towards them which filled the hearts of the poets of Israel. Another more practical indication of their size, as compared to any Palestine timber, is the fact, that from the earliest times they have always been used for all the great works of Jewish architecture. They were so employed for Solomon's Temple, and again for the Temple of Zerubbabel, when nothing but sheer necessity could have induced the impoverished people to send so far for their timber. They were used yet once again, probably for the last time, in Constantine's Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. When the ceiling of that ancient edifice was last repaired, the rafters were no longer from the forests of Lebanon, but gifts from our own oaks by King Edward IV.

Passing from these trees, which, secluded as they are in their

retired nook on the heights of Lebanon, could therefore illustrate the scenery of Palestine only by contrast, we come to those which must always have presented striking objects in the view, wherever they appeared. The first were those to which the Hebrews in Palestine emphatically gave the name of "the tree," or "the strong tree," namely, the "Turkish oak" ("el" or "elah," in Arabic *Sindian*), and those to which the same name was given by a very slight variation of inflexion ("allon")—the turpentine or terebinth,—in Arabic *Butm*. The trees are different in kind; but their general appearance is so similar, as well as the name which the Hebrews (doubtless from this similarity) applied to both, that they may both be considered together. Probably the most remarkable specimen of the oak which the traveler sees, is that called "the oak of Abraham," near Hebron, and of which an elaborate account is given by Dr. Robinson. A familiar example of the terebinth is that at the north-west corner of the walls of Jerusalem, which forms a marked object in any view including that portion of the city. They are both tall and spreading trees, with dark evergreen foliage; and by far the largest in height and breadth of any in Palestine. But these, too, are rare; and this also is indicated by the allusions to them in the Old Testament. In a less degree than the cedars of Lebanon, but more frequently, from their being brought into closer contact with the history of Israel, they are described as invested with a kind of religious sanctity, and as landmarks of the country, to a degree which would not be possible in more thickly wooded regions. Each successive step of the first patriarchal migration is marked by a halt under one or more of these towering trees. Under the oak of Moreh at Shechem, and the oak of Mamre at Hebron, was built the altar and pitched the tent of Abraham. And each of these aged trees became the center of a long succession of historical recollection. Underneath the oak of Moreh, or its successor, Jacob buried, as in a consecrated spot, the images and the ornaments of his Mesopotamian retainers. In the same



ABRAHAM'S OAK, NEAR HEBRON.

Its trunk measures twenty-two and a half feet around the lower part, and its branches cover a space eighty-nine feet in diameter.

From a Photograph by J. Graham, Esq.

place, as it would seem, did Joshua set up the "great stone" that was "by the sanctuary of the Lord;" and the tree, or the spot, appears to have been known in the time of the Judges, as the traditional site of these two events, by the double name of the "oak of the enchantments," and "the oak of the pillar." Still more remarkable was the history of the "oak of Mamre." There are here indeed two rival claimants. The LXX. translating the word "allon" by ὀρῦς, evidently regards it as identical with *elah*, and therefore, as an oak; and it is curious that the only large tree now existing in the neighborhood, is that already alluded to as the chief of a group of ilexes in the valley of Eschol, about a mile from Hebron; and is, in all probability, the same, or in the same situation, as that alluded to in the twelfth century by Sæwulf, and in the thirteenth and fourteenth by Mandeville and Sanutus, as possessed of extraordinary virtues, and the subject of a singular legend. But the tradition in the time of Josephus was attached to a terebinth. None such now remains; but there can be little doubt that it stood within the ancient enclosure which he mentions, and of which ruins still remain to the north of Hebron, under the name of "Abraham's house." It was a gigantic tree, supposed to be coeval with the creation. In the time of Constantine it was hung with images and with a picture representing the Entertainment of the Angels—and underneath its shade was held a fair, in which Christians, Jews, and Arabs assembled every summer to traffic, and to honor, each with his own rites, the sacred tree and its accompanying figures. Constantine abolished the worship and the images, but the tree, with the fair, remained to the time of Theodosius. It gave its name to the spot, and was still standing within the church which was built around it, till the seventh century; and in later times marvellous tales were told of its having sprung from the staff of one of the angelic visitants, and of its blazing with fire yet remaining always fresh. It is said to have burnt down in the seventeenth century.

These are the two most remarkable of the trees mentioned

But there are also others: the "oak of Bethel," under which Deborah, the nurse of Jacob, was interred, known by the name of the "terebinth of tears;" the "oaks of the wanderers," under which the nomad tribe of the Kenites was encamped in the north. And in all these cases, as they had at first been marked out as natural resting-places for the patriarchal or Arab encampments, so they were afterwards in all probability the sacred trees and the sacred groves under which altars were built, partly to the true God, partly to Astarte. One such grove, apparently with the remains of a sacred edifice, exists at Hazori, near Baneas; another, of singular beauty, on the hill of the lesser sources of the Jordan, at the ancient sanctuary of Dan.

These instances are all more or less isolated. There is one district, however, where the oaks flourished and still flourish in such abundance as to constitute almost a forest. On the table-lands of Gilead are the thick oak-woods of Bashan, often alluded to in the prophets, as presenting the most familiar image of forest scenery—famous in history, as the scene of the capture and death of Absalom, when he was caught amongst their tangled branches.

Another tree, which breaks the uniformity of the Syrian landscape by the rarity of its occurrence, no less than by its beauty, is the palm. It is a curious fact that this stately tree, so intimately connected with our associations of Judæa by the Roman coins, which represent her seated in captivity under its shade, is now almost unknown to her hills and valleys. Two or three in the garden of Jerusalem, some few perhaps at Nablous, one or two in the plain of Esdraelon—comprise nearly all the instances of the palm in central Palestine. In former times it was doubtless more common. In the valley of the Jordan, one of the most striking features used to be the immense palm-grove, seven miles long, which surrounded Jericho;—of which large remains were still visible in the seventh century and the twelfth, some even in the seventeenth; and of which relics are still to be seen in the trunks

of palms washed up on the shores of the Dead Sea,—preserved by the salt with which a long submersion in those strange waters has impregnated them. En-gedi, too, on the western side of the same lake, was known in early times as Hazazon-Tamar, "the felling of palm-trees." Now not one is to be seen in the deep thicket which surrounds its spring, and at Jericho even the solitary palm, for many years observed by travelers as the only remnant of its former glory, has disappeared. On Olivet, too, where now nothing is to be seen but the olive and the fig-tree, there must have been at least some palms in ancient days. In the time of Ezra they went forth unto the mount to fetch for the Feast of Tabernacles "olive-branches, and pine-branches, and myrtle-branches, and palm-branches, and branches of thick trees." "Bethany" in all probability derives its name, "the house of dates," from the same cause, and with this agrees the fact that the crowd which escorted our Lord to Jerusalem from Bethany "took branches of palm-trees." Still, it is probable that even then the palm was rarely found on the high land which forms the main portion of historical Palestine. It is emphatically, as we have seen in the account of Sinai, the "tree" of the desert. It is always spoken of in Rabbinical writers as a tree of the valleys, not of the mountains. It grows naturally, and were it cultivated, might doubtless grow again in the tropical climate of the valley of the Jordan. It is still found in great abundance on the maritime plains of Philistia and Phœnicia; and doubtless from the palm-groves, which still strike the eye of the traveler in the neighborhood of Jaffa and Beyrout, and which there probably first met the eye of the Western world, whether Greek, Roman, or Mediæval, came the name of Phœnicia, or "the Land of Palms." Hence, too, at least in recent times, came the branches, which distinguished the pilgrims of Palestine, from those of Rome, Compostella and Canterbury, by the name of "Palmer." But the climate of the hill-country must always have been too cold for their frequent growth. Those on Olivet most likely were in gardens;

the very fact of the name of the "City of Palm-trees," applied as a distinguishing epithet to Jericho—the allusion to the palm-tree of En-gedi, as though found there and not elsewhere—the mention of the palm-tree of Deborah at Bethel, as a well-known and solitary landmark—probably the same spot as that called Baal-Tamar, "the sanctuary of the palm" —all indicate that the palm was on the whole then, as now, the exception and not the rule.

Combined with the palm in ancient times was the sycamore. This too was a tree of the plain,—chiefly of the plain of the sea-coast—also, as we know by one celebrated instance, in the plains of Jericho. As Jericho derived its name from the palms, so did Sycominopolis—the modern Caipha,—from the grove of sycamores, some of which still remain in its neighborhood.

There is one other tree, which is only to be found on the tropical banks of the Jordan, but too beautiful to be omitted; the oleander, with its bright blossoms and dark-green leaves, giving the aspect of a rich garden to any spot where it grows. It is, however, never alluded to in the Scriptures, unless, as has been conjectured, it is the "tree planted by *the 'streams' of water*, which bringeth forth his fruit in due season," and "whose *leaf shall not wither.*"

The geological structure of Palestine, as of Greece, is almost entirely limestone. The few exceptions are in the Valley of the Jordan, which must be considered in its own place. This rocky character of the whole country has not been without its historical results.

Not only does the thirsty character of the whole East give a peculiar expression to any places where water may be had, but the rocky soil preserves their identity, and the wells of Palestine serve as the links by which each successive age is bound to the other, in a manner which at first sight would be thought almost incredible. The name by which they are called of itself indicates their permanent character. The "well" of the Hebrew and the Arab is carefully distinguished from the "spring." The *spring* (*'ain*) is the bright, open

source—the "*eye*" of the landscape—such as bubbles up amongst the crags of Sinai, or rushes forth in a copious stream from En-gedi or from Jericho. But the *well* (*beer*) is the deep hole *bored* far under the rocky surface by the art of man—the earliest traces of that art which these regions exhibit. By these orifices at the foot of the hills, surrounded by their broad margin of smooth stone or marble—a rough mass of stone covering the top—have always been gathered whatever signs of animation or civilization the neighborhood afforded. They were the scenes of the earliest contentions of the shepherd-patriarchs with the inhabitants of the land; the places of meeting with the women who came down to draw water from their rocky depths—of Eliezer with Rebecca, of Jacob with Rachel, of Moses with Zipporah, of Christ with the woman of Samaria. They were the natural halting-places of great caravans, or wayfaring men, as when Moses gathered together the people to the well of Moab, which the princes dug with their sceptered staves, and therefore the resort of the plunderers of the desert, of "the noise of archers in the places of drawing water." What they were ages ago in each of these respects they are still. The shepherds may still be seen leading their flocks of sheep and goats to their margin; the women still come with their pitchers and talk to those "who sit by the well;" the traveler still looks forward to it as his resting-place for the night, if it be in a place of safety; or, if it be in the neighborhood of the wilder Bedouins, is hurried on by his dragoman or his escort without halting a moment; and thus, by their means, not only is the image of the ancient life of the country preserved, but the scenes of sacred events are identified, which under any other circumstances would have perished. The wells of Beersheba in the wide frontier-valley of Palestine are indisputable witnesses of the life of Abraham. The well of Jacob, at Shechem, is a monument of the earliest and of the latest events of sacred history, of the caution of the prudent patriarch, no less than of the freedom of the Gospel there proclaimed by Christ.

Next to the wells of Syria, the most authentic memorials of the past times are the sepulchres, and partly for the same reason.

The tombs of ancient Greece or Rome lined the public roads with funeral pillars or towers. Grassy graves and marble monuments fill the churchyards and churches of Christian Europe. But the sepulchres of Palestine were, like the habitations of its earliest inhabitants, hewn out of the living limestone rock, and therefore indestructible as the rock itself. In this respect they resembled, though on a smaller scale, the tombs of Upper Egypt, and as there the traveler of the nineteenth century is confronted with the names and records of men who lived thousands of years ago, so also, in the excavations of the valleys which surround or approach Shiloh, Shechem, Bethel, and Jerusalem, he knows that he sees what were the last resting-places of the generations contemporary with Joshua, Samuel, and David. And the example of Egypt shows that the identification of these sepulchres even with their individual occupants is not so improbable as might be otherwise supposed. If the graves of Rameses and Osirei can still be ascertained, there is nothing improbable in the thought that the tombs of the patriarchs may have survived the lapse of twenty or thirty centuries. The rocky cave on Mount Hor must be at least the spot believed by Josephus to mark the grave of Aaron. The tomb of Joseph must be near one of the two monuments pointed out as such in the opening of the vale of Shechem. The sepulchre which is called the tomb of Rachel exactly agrees with the spot described as "a little way" from Bethlehem. The tomb of David, which was known with certainty at the time of the Christian era, may perhaps still be found under the mosque which bears his name on the modern Zion. Above all, the cave of Machpelah is concealed, beyond all reasonable doubt, by the mosque at Hebron. But with these exceptions, we must rest satisfied rather with the general than the particular interest of the tombs of Palestine. The proof of identity in each special instance de-

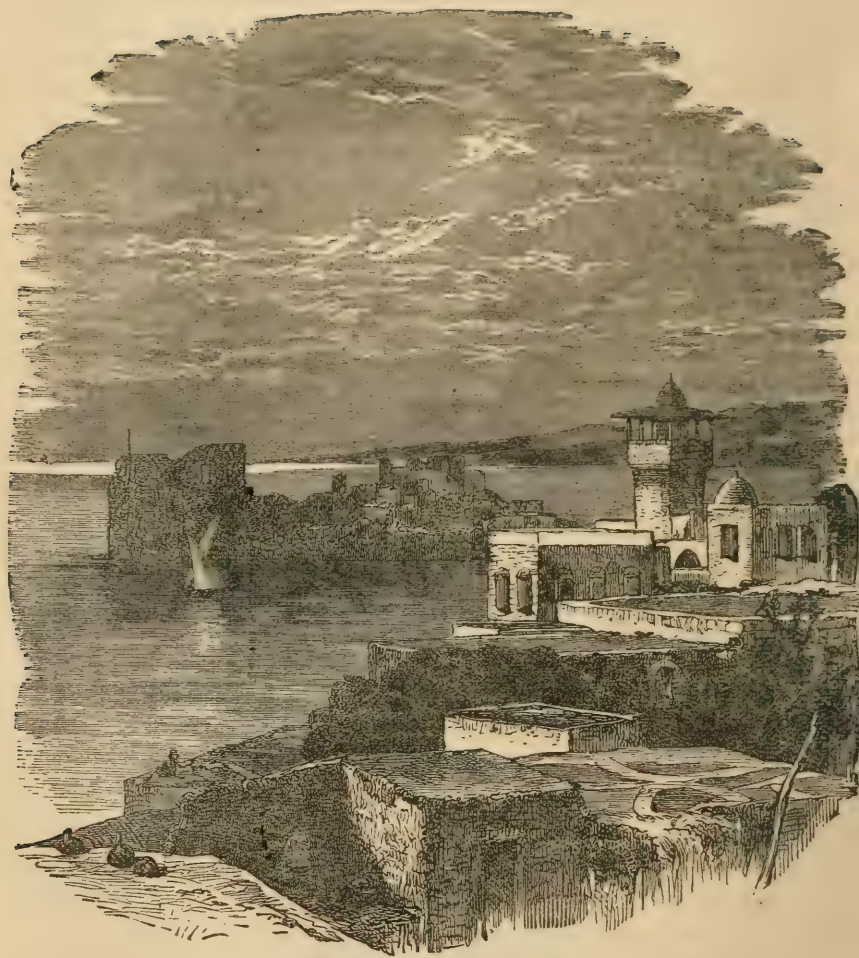


LAKE OF TIBERIAS, FROM THE BATHS..

pends almost entirely on the locality. Instead of the acres of inscriptions which cover the tombs of Egypt, not a single letter has been found in any ancient sepulchre of Palestine; and tradition is, in this class of monuments, found to be unusually fallacious. Although some of those which are described as genuine by Jewish authorities can neither be rejected nor received with positive assurance, such as the alleged sepulchres of Deborah, Barak, Abinoam, Jael, and Heber, at Kedesh; and of Phineas, Eleazar, and Joshua, in the eastern ranges of Shechem; yet the passion of the Mussulman conquerors of Syria for erecting mosques over the tombs of celebrated saints (and such to them are all the heroes of the Old Testament) has created so many fictitious sepulchres, as to throw doubt on all. Such are the tombs of Seth and Noah, in the vale of the Lebanon; of Moses, on the west of the Jordan, in direct contradiction to the Mosaic narrative; of Samuel, on the top of Nebi-Samuel; of Sidon and Zebulon, near Zidon and Tyre; of Hoshea, in Gilead; of Jonah, thrice over, in Judæa, in Phœnicia, and at Nineveh.

Even the most genuine sepulchres are received as such by the highest Mussulman authorities on grounds the most puerile. The mosque of Hebron is justly claimed by them as the sanctuary of the tomb of Abraham, but their reason for believing it is thus gravely stated in the "Torch of Hearts," a work written by the learned Ali, son of Jafer-ar-Rayz, "on the authenticity of the tombs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." "I rely," he says, "on the testimony of Abu Horäiruh, who thus expresses himself:—It was said by the Apostle of God 'When the angel Gabriel made me take the nocturnal flight to Jerusalem, we passed over the tomb of Abraham, and he said, Descend, and make a prayer with two genuflections, for here is the sepulchre of thy father Abraham. Then we passed Bethlehem, and he said, Descend, for here was born thy brother Jesus. Then we came to Jerusalem.'"

It may be well to notice the probable cause of this uncertainty of Jewish, as contrasted with the certainty of Egyptian



MODERN SAIDA OR SIDON.

The seat of an American Missionary station, and even now a place of a little importance. In the background may be seen the ruins of the ancient Sidon founded by the eldest son of Canaan. It was visited by St. Paul.

and, we might add, of European tradition on the subject of tombs. However strongly the reverence for sacred graves may have been developed in the Jews of later times, the ancient Israelites never seem to have entertained the same feeling of regard for the resting-places or the remains of their illustrious dead, as was carried to so high a pitch in the earlier Pagan and in the later Christian world. "Let me bury my dead out of my sight,"—"No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day," express, if not the general feeling of the Jewish nation, at least the general spirit of the old Testament. Every one knows the most signal instance in which this indifference was manifested. Somewhere, doubtless, near the walls of the old Jerusalem, or buried under its ruins, is the "new sepulchre hewn in the rock," where "the body of Jesus was laid," but the precise spot, never indicated by the evangelists, was probably unknown to the next generation, and will, in all likelihood, remain a matter of doubt always. In this respect the controversy regarding the Holy Sepulchre is an illustration of a general fact in sacred topography. Modern pilgrims are troubled at the supposition that such a locality should have been lost. The Israelites and the early Christians would have been surprised if it had been preserved. But the tombs are only one class of a general peculiarity, resulting from the physical structure of Palestine.

Like all limestone formations, the hills of Palestine abound in caves. How great a part the caverns of Greece played in the history and mythology of that country is well known. In one respect, indeed, those of Palestine were never likely to have been of the same importance, because, not being stalactitic, they could not so forcibly suggest to the Canaanite wanderers the images of sylvan deities, which the Grecian shepherds naturally found in the grottoes of Parnassus and Hymettus. But from other points of view we never lose sight of them. In these innumerable rents, and cavities, and holes, we see the origin of the sepulchres, which still, partly natural, and partly artificial, perforate the rocky walls of the

Judæan vaïleys; the long line of the tombs, of which I have just spoken, beginning with the cave of Machpelah and ending with the grave of Lazarus, which was "a cave, and a stone lay upon it," and "the sepulchre hewn in the rock, wherein never man before was laid." We see in them also, the hiding-places which served sometimes for defence of robbers and insurgents, sometimes for the refuge of those "of whom the world was not worthy;" the prototype of the catacombs of the early Christians, of the caverns of the Vaudois and the Covenanters. The cave of Lot at Zoar; the cave of the five kings at Makkedah; the "caves and dens and strongholds," and "rocks" and "pits" and "holes, in which the Israelites took shelter from the Midianites in the time of Gideon, from the Philistines in the time of Saul; the cleft of the cliff Etam, into which Samson went down to escape the vengeance of his enemies; the caves of David at Adullam, and at Maon, and of Saul at En-gedi; the cave in which Obadiah hid the prophets of the Lord; the caves of the robber-hordes above the plain of Gennesareth; the sepulchral caves of the Gadarene demoniacs; the cave of Jotapata, where Josephus and his countrymen concealed themselves in their last struggle,—continue from first to last what has truly been called the "cave-life" of the Israelite nation. The stream of their national existence, like the actual streams of the Grecian rivers, from time to time disappears from the light of day, and runs under ground in these subterraneous recesses,—to burst forth again when the appointed moment arrives,—a striking type, as it is a remarkable instance, of the preservation of the spiritual life of the chosen people, "burning, but not consumed," "chastened, but not killed."

In older times, there is no proof that these ancient grottoes were used for worship, either Canaanitish or Israelite. The "green trees," the "high places," served alike for the altars of the Lord, and for those of Baal and Ashtaroth. The free and open heavens for the one worship, the unrestricted sight of the sun and the host of heaven for the other, were alike

alien to the sepulchral darkness of the holes and caverns of the rocks. The one instance of a cave, dedicated to religious worship before the fall of the Jewish nation, is that at the sources of the Jordan, consecrated by foreign settlers as a sanctuary of their own Grecian Pan. But the moment that the religion of Palestine fell into the hands of Europeans, it is hardly too much to say that, as far as sacred traditions are concerned, it became "a religion of caves"—of those very caves which in earlier times had been unhallowed by any religious influence whatever. Wherever a sacred association had to be fixed, a cave was immediately selected or found as its home. First in antiquity is the grotto of Bethlehem, already in the second century regarded by popular belief as the scene of the nativity. Next comes the grotto on Mount Olivet, selected as the scene of our Lord's last conversations before the ascension. These two caves, as Eusebius emphatically asserts, were the first seats of the worship established by the Empress Helena, to which was shortly afterwards added a third—the sacred cave of the Sepulchre. To these were rapidly added the cave of the Invention of the Cross, the cave of the Annunciation at Nazareth, the cave of the Agony at Gethsemane, the cave of the Baptist in the "wilderness of St. John," the cave of the Shepherds of Bethlehem. And then again, partly perhaps the cause, partly the effect of this consecration of grottoes, began the caves of hermits. There was the cave of St. Pelagia on Mount Olivet, the cave of St. Jerome, St. Paula, and St. Eustochium at Bethlehem, the cave of St. Saba in the ravines of the Kedron, the remarkable cells hewn or found in the precipices of the Quarantania or Mount of the Temptation above Jericho. In some few instances this selection of grottoes would coincide with the events thus intended to be perpetuated, as for example the hiding-places of the prophets on Carmel, and the sepulchres of the patriarchs and of our Lord. But in most instances the choice is made without the sanction, in some instances, in defiance, of the sacred narrative. No one would infer from the mention

of the "inn" or "house" of the Nativity, or of the entrance of the Angel of the Annunciation to Mary, that those events took place in caves. The very fact that, in the celebrated legend, it is a house, and not a grotto, which is transplanted to Loretto, is an indication of what would be the natural belief. All our common feelings are repugnant to the transference of the scenes of the Agony and Ascension from the free and open sides of the mountain to the narrow seclusion of subterraneous excavations. It is possible, as we are often reminded, that the very fact of caverns being so frequently used for places of dwelling and resort in Palestine, would account for the absence of a more specific allusion to them; for grottoes are stables at Bethlehem still; and the lower stories of houses at Nazareth are excavated in the rock. But the more probable explanation is to be found in the fact, that after the devastating storm of the Roman conquest had swept away the traces of sacred recollections in human habitations, the inhabitants or pilgrims who came to seek them, would seek and find them in the most strongly marked features of the neighborhood. These, as we have seen, would be the caves. Helena, by the consecration of two of the most remarkable, would set the example; the practice of the hermits, already begun in the rock-hewn tombs of Egypt, would encourage the belief of this sanctity. And thus the universality of the connection between grottoes and sacred events, which in later times provokes suspicion, in early times would only render the minds of pilgrims more callous to the improbabilities of each particular instance.

I have dwelt at length on the history of the caves, because it is the only instance of a close connection between the history or the religion of Palestine, and any of its more special natural features. In some few cases, the local legends may be traced to similar peculiarities.

The stones called "Elijah's melons," on Mount Carmel, and "the Virgin Mary's peas," near Bethlehem, are instances of crystallization well known in limestone formations. They are

so called, being the supposed produce of those two plots turned into stone, from the refusal of the owners to supply the wants of the prophet and the saint. Another celebrated example may be noticed in the petrified lentils of the workmen at the great Pyramid, as seen by Strabo at its base. In all three instances the traces of these once well known relics have now almost entirely disappeared.

Another peculiarity of the limestone rock has given birth to the legendary scene of the destruction of Sennacherib's army. Two pits were formerly pointed out near Bethlehem as the grave of the Assyrian host. One still remains. It is an irregular opening in the rocky ground, exactly similar to those which may be seen by hundreds, in the wild limestone district, called the Karst, above Trieste. The real scene of the event is probably elsewhere.

The limestone, which is usually white or gray, is occasionally streaked with red. It is in these reddish veins that the pilgrims fancied they saw the marks of the drops of blood in the so-called Scala-Santa; or on the rock near Jerusalem, of late years pointed out as the scene of the martyrdom of Stephen.

The black and white stones—usually called volcanic—found along the shores of the sea of Galilee, have been transformed by Jewish fancy into the traces of the tears of Jacob in search of Joseph.

It is not of the nature of limestone rocks to assume fantastic forms, and in this respect the contrast between the legends of Palestine and Sinai is most apparent. Some few however there are; their very slightness indicating that they have not been the occasion, but only the handles of the stories appended to them. The cavity of the footmark on Mount Olivet; the fissures in the rocks "that were rent," and the supposed entombment of Adam's skull, in Golgotha; the petrifaction of the ass at Bethany; the sinuous mark of the virgin's girdle by Gethsemane; the impression of Elijah's form on the rocky bank by the roadside, near the convent of

Mar Elias, between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, are perhaps the only objects in which the form of the rocks can be supposed to have suggested the legends. But another place will occur for speaking of these more particularly.

It is worth while to enumerate these instances, trifling as they are, in order to illustrate the slightness of foundation which the natural features of Palestine afford for the mythology, almost inevitably springing out of so long a series of remarkable events. And this is in fact the final conclusion which is to be drawn from the character, or rather want of character, presented by the general scenery. If the first feeling be disappointment, yet the second may well be thankfulness. There is little in these hills and valleys on which the imagination can fasten. Whilst the great seats of Greek and Roman religion—at Delphi and Lebadea, by the lakes of Alba and of Aricia,—strike even the indifferent traveler as deeply impressive—Shiloh and Bethel on the other hand, so long the sanctuaries and oracles of God, almost escape the notice even of the zealous antiquarian in the maze of undistinguished hills which encompass them. The first view of Olivet impresses us chiefly by its bare matter-of-fact appearance; the first approach to the hills of Judæa reminds the English traveler not of the most but of the least striking portions of the mountains of his own country. Yet all this renders the Holy Land the fitting cradle of a religion which expressed itself not through the voices of rustling forests, or the clefts of mysterious precipices, but through the souls and hearts of men,—which was destined to have no home on earth, least of all in its own birthplace,—which has attained its full dimensions only in proportion as it has travelled further from its original source, to the daily life and homes of nations as far removed from Palestine in thought and feeling, as they are in climate and latitude—which alone, of all religions, claims to be founded not on fancy or feeling, but on fact and truth.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF SYRIA.

BY CARL RITTER, PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN.

The Three Routes into Palestine from the South—Insignificant Size of Palestine—Perpetuation of the Bond which Binds the Jew to his Former Home—Sacredness of Palestine in the Eyes of the Mahometans—Close Connection between the Local Geography of the Holy Land and the Mental Characteristics of the People—The Philosophy which Underlies This—Syria, how Bounded—Palestine's Position in Relation to the Ancient World—Palestine Viewed in Detail.

FROM the Sinai Peninsula, which we may regard as the vestibule of Palestine, we advance into the Promised Land by three routes: the first along the shore from Gaza to Askelon; the second on the track of the pilgrims, over the very back of the Tih plateau, in a path more or less trodden in the most ancient as well as in comparatively modern and in most recent times—gradually exchanging the savage waste for the deepening green of the outlying southern eminences of the Jebel Chalil or Hebron, once inhabited by a thronging population, and covered with cities; and the third by the route which has been re-opened within our days—the most easterly one of all—that of Wadi Musa, through the depression of the Araba and el-Ghor to the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, where the great gorge which runs through the whole length of Palestine finds its key, and solves the entire physical character of the country.

Pursuing the habitual manner in which I have dealt with other countries, I shall not undertake to limit myself to such an exhaustive account of Palestine as would meet the wants

of a biblical student; this has been well and thoroughly done by H. Reland and by K. von Raumer. We have to do with a district which does not reveal itself to us in its highest interests when studied in its own special sections and subdivisions, but in its relation to all the countries which surround it, and in fact to the entire world; and with a district, too, where all the phenomena of national and individual life are so inextricably mingled with those of the physical conditions of the country, that the result is a blending of characteristics so varied and comprehensive that there is not a land or a nation which does not find something of itself reflected there.

As it is nowhere mere rough power or external greatness which gains sway in the higher departments of affairs, but the inward force, the soul of fire, the strong heart, so it is with the might and the authority of territorial domains. Palestine belongs, so far as mere size is concerned, to the smallest and most insignificant countries on the earth; but its name is one of those most often spoken and most universally loved. Wherever Christian men are found, there it is a hallowed name, to which sacred thoughts, feelings, associations, and convictions cling, and which is bound up with all that is most valued by the judgment or dear to the heart. And wherever heathen nations are found upon the earth, there this Holy Land is yet to be loved, until all eyes shall rest upon it as the birthplace of the true faith, and the scene of the grandest revelations ever made by God to man.

And even the very banished children of Palestine, who never advanced beyond the knowledge of God's *law*, and never accepted the fulfilling of that law in the words and works of the Saviour of mankind, are still bound to the country which their fathers loved, and conquered, and possessed. Their circle of ideas does not yet free itself from the land from which they have been driven out. The patriarchal ties—the belief in Jehovah the one God of their ancestors—the temple built on Moriah—the splendid procession of judges, prophets, lawgivers, psalmists, and kings—the very conquest which subdued

their nation, and the banishment which made them exiles, have conspired to perpetuate the bond which binds the Jewish people to their former home. Thither hundreds of Hebrews even now wander back, after troubled and shipwrecked lives, to find in the land of their fathers a peaceful resting-place, at least for their bones. They come from the east as well as from the west, longing for peace, and lay themselves down in a land which is theirs only as they may purchase some little fragment of it, making it their most cherished wish to die and be buried under the sacred shadow of Mount Moriah.

Even their conquerors and oppressors, the hard and wilful Arabs and Turks, who now possess the land, share in the same fancy, which, though it be a folly, yet is a human and a touching one. The Mohammedan places Palestine only second in sacredness to the birthplace of the prophet; and Jerusalem they designate as "el-Kods," or more exactly, "el-Guds," the Holy City. The pilgrimage to the Haram, *i.e.* to the mosque which the Caliph Omar erected on the site of the temple of Solomon, is the most meritorious one which he can make, excepting that to Mecca.

Within the narrow limits of Palestine we must look for the foundations of that kingdom of truth as well as error, which has now become a subject of historic inquiry: we must trace the latest results to their primitive causes in the geographical conditions of the country: for even here there is opportunity for such agents as the soil under man's foot, and the atmosphere over his head to have influence. If every garden plot owes a part of the rapid progress in flowering and in fruitage to the skillful and the careful hand of the gardener, can not every land in God's wide creation trace, under his wise direction, some measure of mutual action and reaction between the country and the people who inhabit it? Our historians have many things yet to learn, and even yet they continue to fall into one-sided speculations, which betray them and lead them astray. But here is one elemental truth: history does not lie in a domain adjoining nature, so to speak, but actually within

the bosom of nature: history and nature are at one, as God looks down upon them from his canopy of stars. In studying the human soul, the mode of its training, the way of its working—and that is history—we can not leave out of our view the outward field in which it finds its home, the world where it meets the phenomena which it investigates. In spite of the self-confidence of that pretence which science sometimes makes in the person of some of her votaries, of finding all that she needs within the soul of man, and in a mere world of subjective realities, we may boldly assert, that a close study of the outward world, as the soul's training-place, is the only true key to history.

And such a close connection between the local geography of the place and the mental characteristics of the people, is especially to be traced where there was the peculiar simplicity and closeness to nature of the patriarchal inhabitants of Palestine: a simplicity and an intimate communion with the fields and the waters and the skies, traceable alike in the meadows of Mesopotamia, under the Assyrian heavens, and in the land to which the first shepherds found their way; alike on the Euphrates and on the Jordan, at the foot of Ararat and of Hermon. To the same close connection can be traced the primitive settlers' wanderings all over Canaan, their incursions into Arabian territory, and their temporary sojourn in Egypt, then as much a center in respect to the fertility of its soil as to intellectual culture. To the same may be traced the necessity which called for the giving of the law amid the thunders of Sinai, and the wandering of Israel through the Arabian desert. Thither also is traceable the rise of twelve tribes in a land flowing with milk and honey, hard by the rocky crags of Petra, Judæa, and Ephraim. Here, too, we find the significance of the Jordan Valley, the deep course of the Kedron, and the gorge which, as it opened, swallowed up Sodom. To this we must ascribe the isolation of Jerusalem, and the towering up of Sion and Moriah, as if to call the whole world unto them. In this, too, we find the meaning of the harbors, the seas, the



ST. PAUL'S BAY, MALTA.

This view is taken from a point at the back of the bay, near the castle. The island shown as shutting in the bay is Salmonetta.

From a View by Andrews.

cedars of Lebanon, the dew upon Hermon, the fruitful vale of Sharon, the flowery plain of Esdraelon, the beautiful landscape of Galilee dotted with lakes, and the barren deserts which gird the plains and the palm trees of Jericho.

Who can deny that there are individual features in the physical character of a country which are not to be merely grouped as inarticulate and dead appendages to its soil, but are to be studied in their strong reflex action on the life of the people, affecting local traditions, affecting history, affecting the life of nations and states, affecting religion and all thought? And if our earth does not swing around its sun, a mere dead, inorganic planet, but an organism, a living work from the hand of a living God, there must be a similar close and vital connection, like that between body and soul, between nature and history, between a land and its people, between physics and ethics, if I may so speak. It would certainly be impossible to conceive of the development of such a history as that of Israel taking place anywhere else than in Palestine. Nowhere else on the earth could that series of events, and that peculiar training which the people of God had to pass through, have found a theater so conspicuous to the eyes of all the world as that narrow land of Palestine.

To grasp such a fact as this in its more general relations, and to hold it up; to make every man understand how much is involved in the individuality of each country, in what is peculiarly its own physical features, and how deep and wide their influence is upon man,—is what gives to the science of geography its dignity and worth. And it would be well deserving of much patient research, to trace the conditions and the laws which gave character to the primitive abode of the Hebrews, and to show how Providence led them up the steps, cut as it were in the rocks of their own soil, to the "large place" for which he was fitting them; to indicate, too, the gain which the children of Israel found in their newly won Canaan; to show how in that gain all races of men ever since have shared, and how the peculiarities of the physical structure of Palestine have

come to be a kind of possession, so to speak, to men living at the very ends of the earth. The need is great for an exhaustive physical geography of Palestine; and yet it must be confessed none has yet been written, despite the reports of thousands who have visited the Holy Land, and given us their oral or their printed reports. It is only within the latest years that any attempt in this direction has been made, and no thorough results have yet been attained. The work which I offer must therefore be a tentative effort, rather than such a perfect work as can some day be expected, but for which the materials are not yet ready.

Whoever is denied the privilege of looking upon the face of a country which becomes the subject of his study, and which has been the scene of great historical events, will find that those very events, viewed in a true historical light, reflect as from a perfect mirror the physical characteristics of the country where they have occurred, and from which their influence has gone forth to other parts of the world. To stand close to the subject of our studies is not always best: the special features are brought too much into view; and the mind is in peril of being led astray, of losing the unity of the subject, and of being engulfed and lost in a whirl of details. The personal observations of tourists are not therefore always pure gold to the scientific student, because very few tourists have the acumen needful for the highest purposes of travel. The facts which observers bring back must be subjected to the crucible of learning and thought before they become truly valuable; more especially, they must be subjected to the touchstone of history, and then their worth or their lack of worth appears. Oftentimes there are secrets which are passed over in a hurried, superficial way for hundreds of years, before the man comes who can bring out their meaning, and set them in a clear, strong light.

That this has been the case with Palestine, admits of no question. Of the hundreds of thousands who have made their pilgrimage thither, of the thousands who have gone for the

purpose of thorough observation and inquiry, how few there are who, with all that they have brought away for themselves have added anything to the possessions of others, have augmented at all the sum of human knowledge about the Holy Land! A man can not stand at the foot of a very lofty object, and distinctly see the point where it touches the clouds; and the majority of those pious persons who visit Palestine are so overcome by the touching associations of the place, that they lose their cool judgment, cast away the common standards by which they measure the objects of interest in less hallowed spots, and give us little which in a scientific point is valuable. One who stands farther away may be better able to discern the summit, than one who stands at the very foot of a mountain. On the wild crags of Switzerland, if you go too near, you are rewarded only by the view of an inextricable tangle of brush and confused rocks; but if you stand at a distance, you can make out all the details, and have before you the unity of a single combined picture.

It is not otherwise with the point of view which science is compelled to take. Yet it has not been possible at all times for geographical science to gain such a point of view: thousands of preparatory steps have sometimes to be taken before it is reached. Only by a very gradual transition could the geography of Palestine be brought out from the thick clouds of darkness which have so long rested upon its records and its sources: it was a country unknown to those outside of it, even in the remotest periods of history: even its nearest neighbors, even the most accomplished nations of antiquity, knew little or nothing about it. Palestine was from the very outset a land set apart, as Israel was a people set apart; and for two thousand years it remained so. No great highway led through it from nation to nation; all went by it over the roads which skirted it without traversing it, and which all found their type in the sea-line which ran from the harbors of the ancient Phœnician cities to Egypt, along a shore which was almost devoid of havens. The adoption of the theocracy of Jehovah pre-

vented all the other nations of antiquity from forming any ties of alliance with a people so separated from them by geographical conditions, and by mercantile, political, and religious opinions: the theocratic idea formed a perfect cordon around Canaan, and effectually separated all other nations from the chosen people who inhabited it.

Palestine, considered in its connection with the whole of Syria, extends from the Isthmus of Suez and the Sinai Peninsula at the south, northward to the middle terrace land of the Euphrates, where that river breaks madly through the southern branch of the Syrian Taurus.

Syria is bounded by a great sea of sand on the east, as by a great sea of water on the west: it is separated, therefore, alike from the Orient and Occident, and set in a place of isolation. Had it been longer than it is, and narrower than it is, it must have been a mere link between the Armenian highlands of the Taurus and Egypt, and the whole course of its history must have been radically different from what it has been: there must have been a free flowing in of the comparatively rude life of the former, and with this a ready entrance of Egyptian culture, both of which would have met and coalesced in a third and new type of civilization. The geographical situation and relations of Palestine conditioned its history from the very first, and appointed it to be a bridge arching across a double sea of desert sands, and of waters which the want of harbors made useless to it: it connected the Euphrates with the Nile, that the nation which God had selected while its representative was an aged Chaldee chieftain might pass safely to Egypt and thence back to the place which He had appointed for its possession, thenceforth to be isolated from the world, and unimperiled by it. No other country of the ancient world lay as Palestine, the southern half of Syria, did in this regard: the northern portion, Soristan, was far less advantageously situated; lying on the great highway from Babylon and the Euphrates, it was early made a prey to the mighty armies of the East. Palestine lay in the same pathway, and yet she was

spared, and for centuries no enemy came near her. Surrounded by the six great nations of antiquity, the splendor of whose culture is yet a marvel to the world—the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, the Phœnicians, and the Egyptians—and kept apart from them all, it was able to develop its monotheistic religion, to establish its own special polity, to create an entirely antagonistic system of national economy, and to arrive at perfect independence. There was no country so situated in relation to three great continents and five great bodies of water; so that when the fulness of time had come, there was no delay in sending the gospel to the very ends of the earth. May we not see in such a wonderful display of adaptive conditions, which have exerted a decisive effect on the whole course of history, and on the destinies of millions, more than the work of a mere random chance, more than the arbitrary upheaving of the ground, the hollowing out of valleys and gorges at another place, and the letting in the waters of the ocean to form an arm of the sea at still another? When we arrive at a point of view where we command at a glance the whole course of history, and see great causes work out great effects—effects which work as broadly as they work deeply—may we not recognize the working of a Divine Mind above it all, controlling the issue as well as forming the plan; and not alone in the past—*having done* all His task and resting thereafter—but still carrying on His work and perfecting it? Is it possible that claims can be made in the name of science to a profound study of the earth, when its very organic character is overlooked, when it is supposed to be a dead, inert mass, and when it is compared with any of those bodies which we call inorganic, and which we invest with no life or being, and cast out from the list of organized things? In a hundred places, which have exerted an evident influence on the course of history, a deeper study can detect what I call the earth-organism, meaning thereby a certain subtle but real organic power, which the earth puts forth and gives to its inhabitants, not to be confounded, however, with any life of the

globe which pantheism may claim. And even in those places where no living connection is yet traceable between the country and the man, where the earth seems all thrown in haphazard forms,—sea, and gulf, and lake, and mountain, and plain, and desert,—having no pre-arranged harmony of design and ultimate end as a home for man and as a field for history, it will be found in the end that even there God's plans were laid and His work was in execution no less fully and manifestly than in those places which we call the classic ground of history.

Palestine's peculiar position in relation to the rest of the world was very early apparent. Surrounded by populous, wealthy, and powerful nations, it and its capital remained in their center (see Ezek. xxxviii. 12, *in umbilico terræ*, according to the LXX. quoted in Jerome), but untouched by their traffic, and made inaccessible by desert sands and by seas,—kept secure by crags, and gorges, and mountains,—a country without great natural charms, without wealth, and presenting few inducements to the rapacity of outlying nations. Thus in a truly independent way, in the undisturbed cultivation of its rough and hard but richly remunerative soil, and unattracted to foreign fields by open roadsteads and favoring seas, it could develop fully the old patriarchal system, and fulfil the whole expectations concerning the people Israel. This it could accomplish by reason of its isolation, the faith of its people being kept pure from the superstitions which were accepted by the surrounding nations. And this order of things went on for century after century, till the time came for the special mission of the Hebrew people to terminate, and for their land to become the temporal home of a single nation, but the spiritual home of all. When the fulfilling of the law had come, and the outer bounds of the country had been broken through and the enemy had pressed in, the roads were opened at once for the dissemination of the gospel all over the world; and the very destruction of the Jewish capital, and the scattering of that nation, which occurred simultaneously with the ful-

filling of the law in the coming of the Saviour, were made means to the same wonderful end.

This union of amazing contrasts, perfect isolation and independence, with the ability to go out from this isolation and establish commercial relations with all the greatest nations of antiquity—the Arabians, Indians, and Egyptians, as well as with Syrians, Armenians, Greeks, and Romans—is the most striking feature in the country destined to be the scene of the history of the chosen people.

It is also an observable fact, and one which, even if it does not spring from the same physical conditions, is, nevertheless, closely connected with them, that the three great religions which emanated from that part of the earth—Judaism, Christianity, and Islamism—have proved themselves the ones for the reception of which men generally are most susceptible, and which have the greatest possibility of endurance. And these religions could only have gone out with the success which they have commanded, from a central region: had they sprung up in a country on one side, they would not have brought the district at the center into speedy subjection. Even the realm of spiritual ideas is subject, therefore, to geographical conditions; but it is none the less a free realm notwithstanding: for that law of the Spirit, *i. e.* of God, although it is strong, and brings even the thoughts of men into subjection to it, yet rules in accordance with the truest and most certified principles of human liberty.

CHAPTER XL.

COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF SYRIA—(Concluded.)

The Barriers of Palestine Sharply Defined—The Country Viewed in its Living Relations—Direction of the Mountain Ranges—Their Parallelism—The Desert Plateau—Caravan Routes—The Sea-coast of Syria—Want of Good Harbors—Diversity Between Eastern and Western Sides of Palestine—The Jordan a Unique River—The Cœle-Syrian Valley—The Road Lines of Palestine Run North and South—The Knotted Masses of the Lebanon—The Streams of Palestine—Small Brooks of the South of Palestine—Difference Between Phœnicia and Palestine—Resemblances Between Syria and Persia—Terrace-culture.

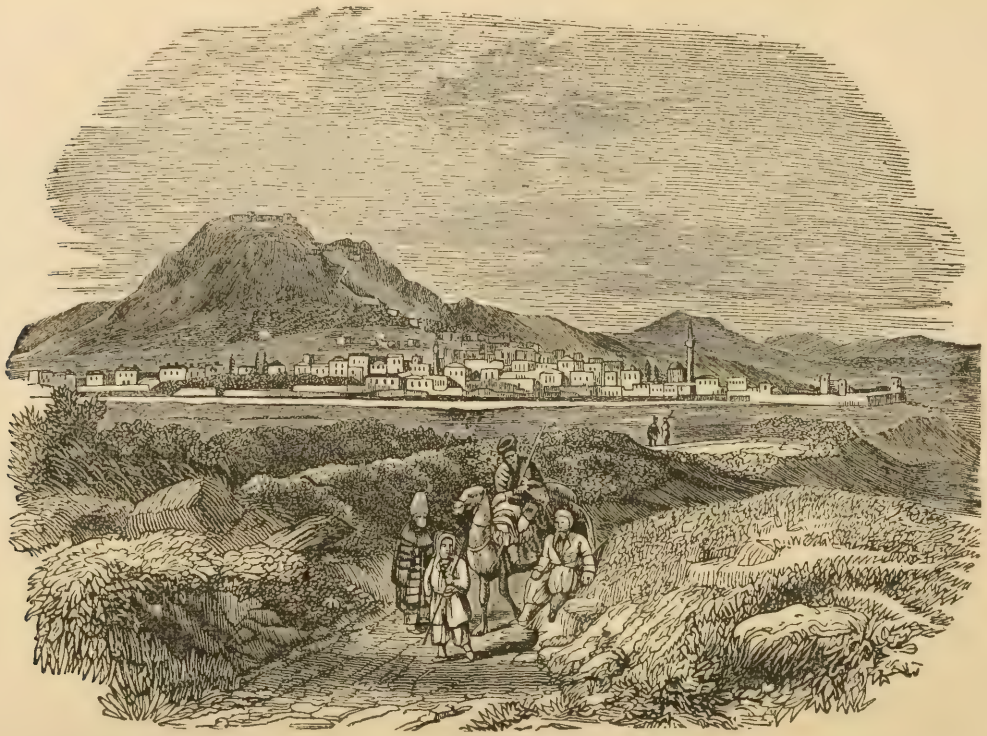
 OOKING now at Palestine more in detail, we discover that its barriers are very sharply defined on the west, the south, and the east, but that at the north it stretches away into Syria without a specially marked boundary line. Still, sharp mathematical lines are to be found nowhere in a scientific use of geography: it is connections rather than demarcations with which we have to do; dependence rather than independence; the mutual action and reaction of nations upon each other, rather than their isolated development. Just as little as any one limb of an animal organism can be detached from the living whole of which it forms a part, and studied by itself and independently of its relations, can any part of the world be viewed by itself, and be exhaustively studied. This has been too much the case with the writers of our ordinary geographical text-books; and the lands which should have been exhibited in their living relations, have been presented as mere dead masses of rock and soil. We see, on the other hand, in every country, only a limb whose relations to the organic body must be sedulously traced, and

whose special functions can not be understood till they are studied, not in the imperfect light which a mere fragment yields, but in the perfect light which the whole throws upon every constituent part.

The principal character of Syria, of which Palestine forms only the south-western portion, is determined mainly by the direction of its mountain ranges: these, whether assuming the larger form or the smaller one of broad-backed hills, traverse the whole country in northerly and southerly lines. The Jordan and the Orontes run along the main valleys in just contrary directions—the former towards the greatest southerly, and the latter towards the greatest northerly depression. These lines serve to indicate the parallelism which obtains between the mountain ranges, the valleys, and the coast line of Syria. Three different kinds of territory are the result—three meridianal belts traceable all the way from the sea-shore to the eastern boundary.

East of these two main streams lies the desert, a plateau ranging from 1,200 to 2,000 feet in hight, and stretching away eastward in unbroken uniformity; at the west is the coast, a belt varying in breadth; and between the two, the country proper, a broad mountain land, in elevation ranging from a very moderate altitude to the alpine proportions of Hermon, which towers 9,000 feet above the sea.

The belt which runs along the eastern frontier from north to south, traversing all Syria from the extreme limits of the Taurus to the Sinai desert, is not remarkable for any marked grandeur in its physical features, and is tolerably uniform in its characteristics, being made up to a considerable extent of a broad plateau of steppe land, rock and sand and debris being freely intermingled in its formation, and forming an immeasurable succession of high plains, whose effect is manifest in the course of the Euphrates, which has been driven to the eastward thereby, and removed from the immediate neighborhood of the Mediterranean Sea. Dotted only sparsely with places of fertility, oasis-like, it has always been the home of



CORINTH.

Here St. Paul became acquainted with a certain Jew named Aquila. And at this place he declared that he would henceforth go to the Gentiles.

wild, nomadic Bedouin races, who, like Israel in its shepherd days, gain their subsistence by a restless wandering. Lying for the most part from one to two thousand feet above the sea, there are found here, in addition to the dry continental climate of the neighboring Heja, a bright sky, hot summers, severe winters, and cutting winds, especially from the north-east. Dryness, a scanty supply of trees and springs, are the natural result of these physical conditions, as we know is the case along the whole southern frontier of Palestine. Yet there are certain portions of this tract which are very much favored by their supply of water. For here is the great route for caravans on their way from the Euphrates to Arabia, passing from Zeugma, near el-Bir and Rumkala, southward *viâ* Aleppo, Damascus, el-Belka, on the east side of the Jordan and the Dead Sea to Medina and Mecca. All along the way there is a succession of oases, giving ample supplies of water for the needs of pilgrims, not lying in the direct line of travel, however, but causing it to turn and twist so as to embrace in its course these natural halting-places. The pilgrimage from Aleppo to Medina usually occupies forty-eight days, of which the half are usually consumed in Syria, the entire distance being what is embraced between 31° and 36½° N. lat., or about 364 miles. If we trace upon the map the chief halting-places of these pilgrims, we gain the clearest possible conception of their route.

From the Euphrates the caravans require two days to bring them to Aleppo, lying 1,200 feet above the sea, and 36° 12′ N. lat.; thence to Homs (Emesa), on el-Aasi (the Orontes), it is a six days' march. Thence to Damascus, 33° 32′ 28″ N. lat., and at an altitude of over two thousand feet above the sea, it requires four days. From that point it is a nine days' march to Belka, at the north-eastern extremity of the Dead Sea; and the last stage is thence to the Kalaat el Hassa or el Hössa, near Shehak, 31° N. lat., at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. From that point the route lies for twenty-four days through Arabian soil, with the exception of the first three

or four, which take the pilgrims over Kalaat, Aeneze, Maan, eastward from Petra to the Syrian Akaba, lying east of Jebal and Jebel Shera (Seir), through the intermediate territory of the ancient Syria Sobal, before they leave the country at the Akaba esh Shamie or el Sham, and, crossing the rocky boundary, fairly enter the true Heja.

The second belt, running northward and southward—the maritime one at the west, the sea-coast of Syria—is of very moderate breadth, never over a few miles wide, and often reduced to a mere strip along the shore by the invasion of the rocky hills; never uniform for any considerable way, but subject to great diversities of form; extending from Gaza along the coast of Palestine, embracing Sephala and the celebrated plain of Sharon, as far as Carmel. Up to that point it has not been insignificant in its breadth; but after leaving Carmel it begins to narrow, sometimes being reduced to a mere fringe between the rocky precipices and the sea, as we find frequently to be the case in northern Soristan.

This maritime belt has therefore a certain analogy in its formation with the Arabian Tehama, which is subject in a measure to African influence, although it skirts the shore of the Red Sea. Still, as a western appendage of the Syrian mountain range, it is more abundantly watered, and is more fertile; by reason of its more northerly situation, it is less parched by the sun; by virtue of its relation to the Mediterranean, it enjoys mild, moist sea winds, and a denser foliage in consequence; and from the great mountain chain in the background, it has more grateful land winds, and greater diversity in the seasons. There was, besides, in the providence of God, a great advantage in the want of good harbors, in the unbroken sea-line which served as a direct guide to coasters, but which offered no inducements to them to tarry. This feature characterized the southern third of the entire Syrian shore, that of Palestine, and was one of the appointed means of keeping the people of that land true to their destiny, as a people "set apart;" while the middle third, that which be-

longed to Phœnicia, was abundantly provided not only with excellent harbors, but with large rivers, and with all the appliances which made them the first commercial nation of the globe, not only chronologically, but in the extent of their resources. This completed the contrast between the Phœnicians and Israel, allowing them to live side by side, and yet in perfect amity.

The third longitudinal belt, the one lying intermediate between the two already specified, belongs in like manner to all Syria, but is so variously modified, that these modifications must have exerted a very powerful influence upon the character of the people inhabiting it. What a marked diversity between the eastern and the western sides!—the gradual terrace-like ascent from the wooded and deeply green plains by the sea, step after step to the high, rounded, grassy hill pastures of the south, or to the steep, rocky, alpine mountains of the center, as well as those more to the north; and, on the contrary, towards the desert frontier at the east, the abrupt naked descent into the long valley of the upper Orontes, and the yet more wall-like valley of the Jordan, scarcely presenting a trace of analogy to the features of the western side of this great mountain belt. The northward and the southward flow of these two rivers is not more in contrast in respect to direction, than it is in all the natural types which are found there; and this despite the fact that they are cradled in almost the same spring. The Orontes is not a marked river in the history of the human race: the Jordan, on the contrary, more favored by nature with tributary lakes, and with richer and rarer gifts, has attained to a remarkable place in its influence on the destinies of man. The Jordan is the leading river of the land. As in the oriental mode of speech a spring is called the "eye" of the landscape, so a river like the Jordan, fed by many springs, may be called the main artery of the land, quickening all life wherever it runs, giving occupation to all settlers upon it, and controlling even the movements of those who settle, by directing them to the most fruitful fields, and influencing

vitally all commerce and all civilization. Deriving its supplies of water from the snowy summits of Hermon and Lebanon, fed by their rains, by the stores which pour forth from the grottoes and caves, and which are augmented by the lakes through which the Jordan flows, it is perennial in its influence; and when all the other adjacent streams of the country are dry and valueless, the sacred stream flows on, still continuing its bounty. With perfect naturalness, therefore, all Palestine looks up to those beautiful snow-crowned heights, whence all the blessings of the land flow down the Jordan vale; and ploughman and shepherd, singer and prophet, theology and poetry, catch thence their fairest symbols and their aptest similes. The depression of the Jordan Valley is the most signal feature in the geography of Palestine, and confers upon the whole country what is most eminently characteristic of it. For the Jordan is a river wholly unique: there is no other like it on the whole face of the earth; a purely inland river, having no embouchure at the sea, and closing its course at the very deepest part of the Old World, and far below the level of the ocean, running parallel with the neighboring coast, and yet never approaching it from source to mouth. Without the adjacent sea this river could not have an existence: it as well as the Orontes would totally disappear; and the two valleys combined, with the exception of that formed by the lower Orontes after it turns abruptly towards the sea at Antioch, would constitute one unbroken cleft from the far north of Syria to the Red Sea itself. But now the Jordan, gathering its waters from snowy mountain-tops, and from permanent subterranean enclosures, flows over a succession of gradual terraces which are only partially arid, and through a succession of lake basins broken through and hollowed out of the solid rock: nowhere a true river system, but of very heterogeneous character; having no tributary streams, but rolling rapidly here and quickly there, traversing a mere cleft riven through the whole length of Palestine.

The long mountain range running from north to south, and

whose eastern base is washed by the rivers just mentioned, consists of a number of parallel ridges of peaks with their adjacent spurs, containing some lofty summits and some high rocky swells, with valleys lying between, all of which are at a considerable elevation above the sea; the Val Bekaa, in which Baalbec is situated, between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, being 3,000 feet above the ocean level. There is no great valley crossing these ridges eastward and westward: for had there been, the Jordan would not have lost itself in a small inland sea, but would have broken through to the Mediterranean, just as the Orontes once apparently did at the Mons Casius of the ancients, where it takes a sharp western turn towards the sea. The great plateau east of the Jordan Valley was purposely intended to sink at the north, and the mountain ranges west of the Orontes also, preparatory to their rising again in the great Aman and Taurus chains, in order to effect the complete isolation of northern Soristan, and to allow a free passage for all the nations of Hither Asia to go from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. Had there been a transverse valley across Palestine, it would have been turned to large account for this purpose, and the whole history of the country would have been different from what it has been.

And not only is there wanting a deep central valley from the east to the west of Palestine, but there are also wanting any that lie high, any which may serve approximately for the purposes of travel or traffic. All the lines run from north to south, and there are almost no clefts which allow free passage between these lateral lines: the few insignificant ones which do thus bridge the hill and mountain chains have been converted into places of great local importance. In the middle third of Syria (reckoning Palestine as the southern), the Lebanon range has proved an equally effectual barrier: it has but a single pass from Damascus to the Mediterranean; and the people of the whole region have made little progress, and transmit faithfully from generation to generation the modes and customs and opinions of their remote ancestors. The towering



PATMOS.

mountains, with their difficult passes, so limited the possibilities of civilization there, that it was nearly all centered in Damascus at the east, and in the Phœnician cities on the seaboard; while on the rolling and more open and accessible hills of Palestine, men could labor more easily, and communicate with each other more readily; and the result was the building of the numerous cities of the south—Hebron, Sichem, Samaria, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Safed, and others. Middle Syria can show no parallel to this; as little can northern Syria; and the civilization of those regions was compelled to center at Damascus, Aleppo and Hamath, in consequence of their relation to the Euphrates.

Although in the physical configuration of Syria, as I have thus far pictured it, a great share of the phenomena with which history has to deal may find its key, still there are other conditions, of which I must speak, which have also exerted a large influence. They are hypsometrical in their character: they deal with lines which do not run northward and southward, like those already studied, but eastward and westward, and which determine much of the hydrography of Syria.

I allude to the colossal piling up within the middle third of the country, of the knotted masses which compose the Lebanon. The first result of this feature is the contrasted and divergent valleys of the Orontes and of the Jordan, each of them from sixty to seventy hours long (adopting the oriental method of measuring such distances); and the next is the formation of those abundant Phœnician streams which flow into the Mediterranean, as well as those which water the plateau of Damascus. Between the head waters of the two great Syrian rivers tower the two parallel ranges of the Lebanon (33° to 34½° N. lat.), dominating over all the landscape, branching out in all directions, and rising in some of their peaks to the height of 9,000 feet. Among these colossal mountains we are not restricted longer to the mere valleys which run north and south, such as we have only found elsewhere; but here are transverse ravines as well, through which

the abundant waters of Lebanon flow out in all directions. Thus the Barada, which with its tributaries flows directly from the heights of Anti-Lebanon to the plateau at the eastern base, gives to Damascus its beautiful girdle of gardens, and then, having no outlet to the Mediterranean, disappears in the Bahr el Merdj, like the Jordan in the Dead Sea.

On the western declivities there are many deep cross valleys also breaking through, beginning at Nahr Kasmieh (the Leontes) at the south, coming up by Sûr (Tyre), parting the knotted group of the Lebanon, and allowing for a great part of the year the free passage of the perennial mountain streams which dash grandly down, and enter the sea upon the Phœnician coast; a coast so richly supplied with harbors, and so favored with the abundant irrigation of these numerous streams, and so securely protected from invasion on the land side by the wild masses of rock which advance almost to the sea-side, and so favored by winds and currents and all the accessories of navigation, that from the earliest times every natural haven has witnessed the growth of a city upon it; and from that coast men were attracted in the very infancy of the world to push out and explore other regions, and build up a commerce with other and ruder nations.

What a contrast this presents to the lower coast of Syria, where there is to be found scarcely a single mountain stream, scarcely a brook even, and hardly a single harbor; with almost the single exception of the Kishon (Keisûn), north of Mount Carmel, embouching in the Bay of Acre! Not in the magnitude of the streams of Palestine lies their importance, for they are all very small, none of them longer than men march in two or three days; not in their navigability, for they are all inaccessible to even the lighter kinds of shipping; but in their terrace-formed valleys, and in the deltas and the peculiar line of plains along the shore to which their dashing waters, carrying down the finely crumbled *detritus* of the hills, give rise. There was no lack of fertile plains along the sea-

board of Palestine, and hence the industry of the early inhabitants won for it the fame of being a land flowing with oil, milk, and honey; and the Canaanitic agriculture, which converted the terraces on every hill-side into smiling gardens, was cited as the model of the whole Levant and southern Europe. The great difference between Phœnicia and Palestine was this, that the latter country retained within itself all the profitable land which its river-courses formed, and was able to avail itself of it. But the former country lost it in great measure; the dashing mountain streams swept the fine particles of alluvium out to sea, and allowed the formation of no rich plains along the coast. This also tended to drive the people to the pursuits of navigation and commerce.

This great mountain chain of Lebanon, then, struggling upwards towards the line of perpetual snow, but hardly anywhere reaching it, yet gathering each winter enough of snow and ice to serve as a sufficient supply for the summer to come, is what proves so rich and fruitful a blessing to southern and central Syria. Its loftiest summits are found, too, at the southern extremity of the chain; and this especially favors Palestine. The countries which cluster around the base of Lebanon are supplied with constant moisture, while those at a distance from it, the great Syrian plains, are scantily watered. The Holy Land may be considered as a great oasis in the desert. The entire domain of Egypt, Arabia, and Assyria is only scantily dotted with patches of verdure, or lined with it along the rivers' sides; but the Lebanon once blessed all Palestine, and covered it with streams.

Syria is divided, as we now see, not only into the three long belts which follow the direction of the meridian, the eastern or continental, the western or maritime, and the central or the mountainous, but it is also subdivided into southern, central, and northern Syria by other characteristics. The central portion is the province covered by the Lebanon, which separates as a mighty barrier the northern from the southern, and whose branches are so far inferior to it in size, that they

can lay no claim to analogy in respect of altitude, but merely in respect of general configuration and physical character.

Without the Lebanon, Syria would not have differed essentially from Persia or Arabia, and would have been utterly unable to play that part in history which has been accorded to her. But with the towering Lebanon to yield supplies of moisture, Damascus could become not merely the delightful city of gardens which she has always been, but one of the most ancient homes of culture on the earth. The deeply indented shore on the west, with its rivers, and the harbors which were formed at their rocky mouths, could become the home of a great commercial people, and an outlet for all the products of the busy East. The northern portion, Soristan, the country which served as the track of travelers on their way from the most western bending of the Euphrates to the turning of the Orontes at Antioch, was the most meagrely supplied of all, and yet it was not unsupplied with the waters of the Lebanon; while the southern third, Canaan, the later Palestine, was richly watered from Hermon down—was kept fruitful by the influence of its leading river—was made conscious of its own wealth, its own independence of the rest of the world, its own security; and so cherishing its own resources, and adding to them, it went on in its chosen path of inward growth, without foreign wars, and without any contact with the world without, until at last the time arrived when it too was made a prey, and was tossed up and down in the flooding and ebbing of battle. But that this could happen at all was indicated by the physical structure of the country, and by the manner of its connection through Cœlo-Syria with Soristan. And yet despite this, and despite all the analogies which bind the southern third of the country to the northern third, there is enough left to bring Palestine out into amazing prominence as a country providentially appointed as the home of a people who were to be "set apart."

Both the northern and the southern sections of Palestine are effectually shut off from the central or the Lebanon prov-

ince; Palestine proper, or the land of the Jordan, is essentially divorced from Soristan, or the land of the Orontes. The latter river rises in the high Lebanon range, but it very soon leaves it, or flows as a mere neighbor to its eastern base, the river being skirted on the east by the vast Syrian plateau. The Jordan, on the contrary, plunges down at once into a deep ravine, in which lies its entire course thereafter, its eastern margin not being a vast plateau, but a towering wall of rock, precipice-like, sometimes rising to the height of thousands of feet, and running back from the river in the form of cool, breezy plains, not destitute of pasturage. This difference in the configuration of the two river basins made a great change in their historical influence; for whereas the Orontes, open on the east to the free advance of the wandering races who came westward from Hither Asia, presented no obstacle, the Jordan was effectually closed, and the hordes of the Heja menaced it in vain. The destinies of Soristan were consequently most intimately connected with those of Assyria and Mesopotamia: the basin of the lower Orontes was a highway for nations—a great channel for commerce, as the history of Tadmor, Palmyra, Antioch, and Aleppo shows—a connecting link between the East and the West, between the Euphrates and Asia Minor. Assyrians, Persians, Parthians, Romans, Greeks, Seleucidians, Saffanidians, Mongolians, and Turks, pressed into the land, and at present the Turcomans hold undisputed possession of it: wave after wave swept those away who had for a little season possessed it, and there was never time when any nation could abide there long enough to form a history. But at the south, and along the Jordan Valley, there never was any commingling of races; the barrier was effectual, and checked all invasion until that of the Mohammedans. The traffic of the Israelites under Solomon, in the Nabathæan period, as well as that of the patriarchs with Egypt, was not effected through the channel by which Joshua entered the land, but by traversing the Sinaitic desert. More temporary yet were the transits across the land of one of the Pha-

raohs, Alexander, and the Seleucidæ; while the Roman and Byzantine power found their limit outside of Palestine.

The greater abundance of springs, brooks, rivers, and lakes, must also be taken into account, as adding very much to the value of Palestine as the permanent home of a nation; for the great lake (Famieh or Bohaire), found on some modern maps, between Hama and Antioch, and near Apomea, must be struck out, being placed there only by hypothesis, to preserve a supposed analogy between that district and that at the south.

A third difference lies in the method and skill in agriculture among the Hebrews, who followed what I have indicated by the expression terrace-culture,—a method still in vogue on the Phœnician hills. What was not found in any one of the three divisions of Syria, were those broad fertile plains, the existence of which is essential to the existence of any extremely populous country. This want, Phœnicia could supply by means of its large foreign commerce, which made the then known world a granary; but Palestine and Soristan could not supply it. Both of these districts were removed respectively but a few days' march over the desert, from two countries which could furnish them with corn in times of great scarcity; Mesopotamia to the latter, Egypt to the former. What an influence such a dependence gave to those great centers of civilization, is well known: it conferred upon them their empire as well as their culture, and caused all power, and wisdom, and luxury to be briefly summed up, when men pronounced the names of Memphis and Babylon.

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